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REVOLT OF 1905 IN BENGAL

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BINOY JIBAN GHOSH

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To

**The Hallowed Memory of
My Revered Mother,**

**infinitely stricken and suffering but supremely brave
and indomitable, bludgeoned and buffeted to an early
death, through a succession of tragic calamities,**

Shrimati Pravas Ranjini Ghosh

**no less a Martyr to the cause of Indian Independence than
her Martyr sons, Shahid Naba Jiban, and Shahid Nirmal
Jiban.**

P R E F A C E

History is the Biography of Mankind. The focus on history of different writers varies. "The eternal theme of History is the unknowable variable-Man," writes the eminent American historian, Barbara Courtald. This monograph speaks of history that is created by men and women.

The first two chapters portray the background to the Revolt of 1905 in Bengal, delineated in the subsequent chapters.

The publications from which the materials of this compilation have been largely collected and collated have been mentioned in the Bibliography. But I owe it to myself to mention particularly my debt of gratitude to one work K. C. Ghosh's **Roll of Honour**. That book is a treasure house of information and data relating to India's Independence struggle. In our personal lives I always regarded late Kali Charan Ghosh as an elder brother.

I have to acknowledge my gratitude and offer my humble thanks to friends whose help and efforts made possible the printing and publication of this small volume. I am infinitely indebted to Sri Gopendra Kumar Dutta, but for whose patience and perseverance this book would never have been published ; I am deeply obliged to my colleague in the Municipal Corporation of Calcutta, Sri Pashupati Bhattacharya, who besides taking on himself the irksome task of preparing the Index, was continuously labouring hard to see through the printing and publication ; I really do not know how to express my thanks and gratitude adequately to Dr. Sourendra Mohan, Ganguly, Librarian, Rabindra Bharati University for his

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8 May, 1987.

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INDIA AWAKES FROM SLUMBER OF AGES

The intellectual, religious, social, cultural, and political ferment that shook India out of her ages-old sloth and slumber in the nineteenth century of the Christian era, particularly in the second half of it is often spoken of as indicating a renaissant India. Similarly one hears of the renaissance in Bengal.

But this phenomenon is more a new birth, an awakening than a rebirth of the old, a reawakening. True, there was an almost simultaneous harking back to India's past heritage, to its treasures and glories, often unduly glorified. For instance, the 'PUSHPAK' Chariot, referred to in ancient Indian literature, was claimed in all seriousness by some ardent admirers of Indo-Aryan achievements to be an actual forerunner of the modern aeroplane.

But this new ardour for ancient Indian lore and splendour was really an indigenous reaction and counter-thrust to the tidal waves of new trends and currents coming across Western seas in the wake of the new conquerors of India. The newly consolidated British regime over India led inevitably to the dissemination of Western ideas and ideals, siphoned into Indian brains through the English language, and fostered through contacts with Europeans. It was basically a new awakening rather than a revival of old Values. It was a new genesis rather than a resurrection of the dead.

Another preliminary point has to be noted in this regard. The new awakening was neither uniform, nor simultaneous in all regions and parts of the sub-continent. It started naturally in the three Presidency Cities of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras. In Calcutta, British India's metropolis, it not only came earliest, but was the most spectacular. Poona, the seat of the once mighty Maratha Empire of the Peshwas, had an early and momentous awakening. From these important ports and cities the Western tide seeped inwards into their hinterland.

Import of invisibles from the West :

The Britishers were exporting to Britain from India raw materials and food-stuff obtained at low rates, and importing into India articles of British manufacture, and selling them here at considerable profit. They were, thereby, impoverishing India, and draining out her financial and economic resources.

But, wafted as by phantom ships from the shores of Europe, an invaluable Cargo of invisibles was coming to India.

Immigration of living visibles from the West :

There was also the immigration of a large number of living visibles into India. A considerable band of Christian missionaries from Europe trooped into India, hell-bent on propagating the gospel of their faith among the bedevilled natives ; European merchants and traders to ply their calling here ; and, of course, British military and Civilian personnel to keep the natives under their heels, and to confer on them the blessing of a civilised government.

What were those invisibles from the West ? In a word, they connoted Western thoughts and history, and denoted Western modus operandi. But, first, as to the medium through which Indians imbibed these new thoughts and ideas—

—The English language and literature.

English Language and Literature :

Slaves willy-nilly have to learn the language of their masters. During the long Muslim rule over India, the elite among the Hindus, either to serve their self-interest, or to gain in dignity and status in the eyes of their masters, had to learn Farsi or Persian, which was the court language. Munshi Nabu Kissen (afterwards the famous Dewan of Lord Clive, and the founder of the Sovabazar Raj family of Calcutta) was proficient in Farsi, and hence was chosen to act as the interpreter between Nawab Siraj-Ud-Daula and the emissaries of Clive in the garden-house of Omi Chand in Calcutta early in 1757. Even

Raja Ram Mohun Roy wrote his first tract against Hindu idolatry in Farsi.

For filling of the lower rungs of the administration, for assistance in their commercial transactions the British needed English-Knowing Indians. Indians, on their part, who wanted jobs under the British administration, or in British commercial concerns, and who wanted to be associated with the trading ventures of their English masters as partners, or agents eagerly learnt the English language. The two most outstanding pioneer examples are Raja Ram Mohun Roy, and his friend and admirer, Prince Dwarkanath Togore. Ram Mohun served as Sheristadar of the East India Company in Dacca, Ramgarh, and other places, and then as Dewan in Bhagalpur. Next, he was personal Dewan of an Englishman, named Thomas Woodford for some time, and of John Digby for several years. Through such service he acquired a huge fortune not always, perhaps, by means that would stand strict scrutiny. Dwarka Nath Tagore was an employee of Nimak Mahal, the British Salt Monopoly concern. Then, he became partner of the famous Carr & Tagore Company, and amassed enormous wealth. Incidentally, they were among the first Indians to visit England.

Western Political ideas and ideals :

But English language and literature by itself was not of such dynamic importance to the Indian people as the new political and other ideas and ideals that came to them through its medium. What were these ? Before discussing them in details, it is better to be a little more concrete, as we have been dealing with abstractions so far. The writings of the British thinkers, Hobbes, Bentham, Herbert Spencer, and John Stuart Mill, and of the French Positivist August Comte influenced deeply the Indian intelligentsia. When in 1853, Iswar Chandra Vidya-sagar reorganized the Sanskrit College in Calcutta, and introduced the teaching of English subjects in its curriculum, he

declared that the study of John Stuart Mill's works was indispensable for students. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the great Bengali Litterateur wrote an essay on Mill's interpretation of August Comte. Thom Paine's Age of Reason was avidly read by young educated Bengalis in the middle of the nineteenth century. Even the great French rationalist, Voltaire did not fail to attract Indian minds. In the Anglo-Hindu School, founded by Ram Mohun, boys were asked to translate into Bengali the English rendering of passages from Voltaire.

The events of western history which seem to have had the strongest influence on the Indian intelligentsia were the American War of Independence, the French Revolution, and the Italian Risorgimento, whose leader Giuseppe Mazzini inspired many Indian patriots.

A sense of Nationalism and political Unity :

First, there began to emerge a sense of nationalism and political unity among the inhabitants of the sub-continent. By 1849, with the annexation of Punjab from the Sikhs, the piece-meal conquest of India by the British was complete. They now devoted themselves to the task of consolidating their rule over the land—to spread its tentacles to the remotest villages. For this they had to set up a well—knit and uniform system of administration, law and procedure. For purposes of government, troop movement, and thorough exploitation of the material resources of the land the British had to build a network of railways, to introduce postal and telegraphic system of communication. Contrary to British intentions and expectations, these things—a strong, stable, uniform system of administration covering the whole of the Indian peninsula, a uniform code of laws, and legal procedure, easy means of travel and communication created a new consciousness of political unity among the Indian people. The inhabitants of the different parts of India began to feel they belonged to one nation.

No sense of political unity among the inhabitants of India

did exist prior to the nineteenth century of the Christian era. A sense of nationalism and political unity among Indians, as admitted by both Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, was a by-product of British rule over India.

A study of European history reinforced this sentiment. This Indian nationalism was really an echo in Indian breasts of the nationalism developed in England, France, Holland, Spain, Italy, and Germany during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. The giant Indian intellectuals, mostly from the legal profession, were the avant garde of this new Indian nationalism.

In this context, we are faced with the vexed question of the fundamental unity of India. Notwithstanding that the student of Indian history is confronted with the picture of a divided and fragmented India rather than of a unified land, it is maintained that the fundamental unity of the Indian people had persisted through the ages.

To add to the difficulty, our great poet Rabindranath in his inimitable language glorified India's unity in diversity. He, of course, did not live to see the partition of India. To common ears the expression unity in diversity sounds like a juxtaposition of incompatibles, illustrative of the figure of speech, Oxymoron. In any event, where diversity is great there is hardly any unity ; conversely where unity is strong there is little diversity.

Let us examine the nature of this fundamental unity of India, spoken of by such eminent historians as V. A. Smith, J. Cunningham, and Radha Kumud Mukherjee. First, as to what is generally described as the Hindu period of Indian history. A vague sense that the land-mass bounded by the Himalayas and the seas, was one country existed from ancient times. This is borne out by India's classical literature. Apart from that vague sense of geographical unity, there were the bonds of common religious scriptures, and observances ; the

Sanskrit language : common places of pilgrimage ; the rivers held sacred in common ; and the bond of the two great epics the Ramayana, and Mahabharat. The socio-economic bond was the uniform pattern all over the land of the self-sufficient village community. All these factors might have given the inhabitants of India in the Hindu period a sense of religious, social, and cultural unity. But this unity had no administrative, or political content. Those factors did not, and could not generate among the inhabitants of India a consciousness that they belonged to one nation, one state, or one political unit. Only during the reign of the great emperor, Asok Maurya did a part of Afghanistan, and almost the whole of India, barring the extreme south, come under one uniform administration.

During the long Muslim rule over India the religious and cultural bonds of unity among the inhabitants of India were snapped. The village community, perhaps, survived mutatis mutandis. Under Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq, and during the last years of Aurangzeb most of the country came under one administration. Aurangzeb's administration, however, was not uniform, but discriminatory. It did not make for unity, but division and disunity.

In any event, there could not possibly be any political unity among Indians under Islamic rule. There were the proud and tyrannical Muslim conquerors ruling over the downtrodden Hindu slaves. The Muslim conquerors hated their Hindu subjects as "KAFERS" (infidels) and "but-parasts" (idolators). There can be no political unity among rulers and masters and their subjects and slaves. We may as well imagine that there could be a political unity among Britishers and Indians during the British regime as envisage a political unity among Muslims and Hindus during the Islamic reign over India. Why the hell should the proud and victorious Muslim conquerors care to come down to an equal level with their abject Hindu subjects grovelling in the dust under their heels ?

Even if we lay aside the question of Hindu—Muslim unity, the inhuman atrocities and brutalities perpetrated by the Maratha 'bargirs', or marauders on the people of Orissa and West Bengal as late as the middle of the eighteenth century is proof positive that there was no sense of national and political unity, or solidarity among the inhabitants of India prior to the nineteenth century of the Christian era.

This new sense of nationalism, or consciousness of political unity among Indians found expression, at first, in the formation of regional political associations leading up eventually to the foundation of an All-India political organisation—the Indian National Congress in 1885.

But due to the past history of the land, and the imperialist machinations of the British the political unity among Indians never attained complete maturity, and full growth. To counteract the Indian National Congress the All-India Muslim League was started in 1906 as a separate political organization for the Muslims of India. Political unity among Indians remained only halfbaked till the middle of August, 1947, and in consequence thereof two separate, sovereign independent states emerged on the subcontinent—Bharat, that is India, and Pakistan.

Consciousness of Political Rights and Liberties :

The ideas, or ideals of political rights and liberties that the Indian people got from the West formed the basis of India's struggle for independence. The idea of representative, or popular government was the most important. During the first forty-five years of its existence (1885-1929) the main political demand of the Indian National Congress was the introduction and expansion of representative government in India under the British Crown. The ideas of civil liberty, of individual liberty, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of association et cetera began to exercise the minds of educated Indians.

In the first half of the nineteenth century there was only one

outstanding Indian national, or public figure, and he was a Colossus. He was Raja Ram Mohun Roy. Ram Mohun was born into a Brahmin Zemindar family in 1772 (or 1774) in the village of Radhanagar in District Hooghly, West Bengal. In his childhood he learnt well Sanskrit works from pundits, and Arabic and Persian from Moulavis. Next, while serving under English masters, he delved into English language and literature, and Western history and philosophy. Western political concepts had a strong impact on his mind. In 1814 he retired from service and settled down permanently in Calcutta. The titular Mughal Emperor, Akbar Shah II conferred the title of Raja on him, and sent him to England to persuade the authorities there to enhance the Emperor's annual pension. He sailed for England in 1830, and died at Bristol on the 27th September, 1833.

During his sixteen years' stay in Calcutta (1814-1830) he laboured ceaselessly for religious and social reforms, for the spread of English education, for asserting the civil rights of his countrymen against the reactionary measures of the Government.

To discuss the social and political problems before the country Ram Mohun started his own Bengali Journal, Sanvad Kaumudi in 1821, and his Farsi Journal, Mirat-Ul-Akhbar in 1822. But early in 1823 Government issued a press ordinance restricting the freedom of the press. It was provided that the proprietor, printer, and publisher of a paper will have to obtain a license from the Government before a paper could come out. An affidavit will have to be sworn by them before a Magistrate, and then submitted to the Chief Secretary.

Ram Mohun, after recording a strong and dignified protest against the new regulations, stopped the publication of his Mirat-Ul-Akhbar. This political protest is, perhaps, the first by an Indian Citizen against an unpopular Government measure. Not content with this, Ram Mohun, supported by Dwarkanath Tagore, and five other distinguished Bengalis,

lodged his protest against the Press regulation with the Supreme Court. He also sent a memorandum to the Government in England pointing out that such restrictions on the Press were a serious interference with the liberty of the people. This memorandum is a landmark in the chronicle of India's independence struggle.

A few years later came an invidious piece of legislation. In 1827 was passed the Jury Act, by which no Hindu, or Muslim could be empannelled on a jury in a case against a Christian, whereas a Christian could serve as a jury in a case against a Hindu, or Muslim. Ram Mohun voiced his protest against this unjust and discriminatory legislation.

While he was in England, the parliamentary committee set up in connexion with the renewal of the Charter of the East India Company in 1833 invited Ram Mohun to give his evidence before it. Ram Mohun, however, instead of appearing personally, chose to send some written memoranda to the Committee. In these memoranda he pointed out that though the Permanent Settlement had conferred security and well-being on the zemindars, it had left the ryots, or peasants at the mercy of the zemindars, and afforded no relief to the cultivators of the soil. He also pleaded that the number of high-salaried British officials might be reduced, and in their place Indian Officers on lower pay could be appointed. He also demanded that the Judiciary and the Executive should be separated.

Ram Mohun, thus, became the first spokesman of the Indian people, the first Indian Tribune of the People-vis-a-vis the British Government. And Ram Mohun truly represented his people's demands and grievances as India's first national leader.

Ram Mohun also stood forth as the vindicator of his people's honour. In his memoranda Ram Mohun stoutly defended the excellence of the national character of the Indian people against the calumnies unjustly hurled against it.

Raja Ram Mohun Roy was an ardent lover of liberty and freedom. In his eagerness to salute the French revolutionary tricolour flying on a passing French Vessel, he hurt one of his legs whils rushing to the deck of his ship. He would not join a dinner party because his heart was laden with sorrow at the news of the supplanting of the constitutional government of Naples, in Southern Italy by the Austrian troops. He threw a dinner party to celebrate the achievement of independence by the Spanish colonies of Latin America. Paradoxically enough this great-hearted cosmopolitan champion of liberty, so far as his motherland, was concerned, firmly believed that Britains becoming ruler of India was a providential boon to the people India, and it was his fervent prayer that long may that rule continue ! Alas ! for hapless Mothar India ! This was also exactly the view of Ram Mohun's close friond and admirer, Prince Dwarkanath Tagore.

A most painful instance of political inconsistency on the part of Raja Ram Mohun was his support to the rapacious and oppressive British indigoplanters against the helpless and oppressed Indian indigo cultivators. Shockingly enough, Prince Dwarkanath likewise supported the utterly unjustified privilege enjoyed by Europeans charged with committing crimes in the districts to be tried exclusively by judges of their own race. It may be noted that subsequently even successive British Law Members, and a British Chief Justice considered this privilege indefensible.

Raja Ram Mohun Roy, and Prince Dwarkanath Tagore had also agitated in favour of colonisation of India by Britishers for the good of the Indian people.

These conflicting attitudes show clearly how shaky and uncertain was the hold of the Western political ideas of liberty and democracy even on the best of Indian brains and minds in the first half of the nineteenth century.

A stronger and surer sense of patriotic nationalism was voiced by that scintillating young Anglo-Indian poet, journslist,

and teacher, Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1809-1831). In his poetical work, Fakir of Jhangira, published in 1827, is included a poem, which, in point of time, is considered the first patriotic poem on India. Dwijendranath Tagore, eldest brother of poet Rabindranath, rendered it into Bengali. The first six lines of the poem run thus :

"My country in the days of glory past,
A beauteous halo circled round thy brow,
And worshipped as a deity thou wast—
Where is thy glory, where that reverence now.
One eagle pinion is chained down at last,
And grovelling in the dust art thou."

Derozio convened a meeting in the Town Hall of Calcutta to celebrate the July, 1830 European revolution. On Christmas day, 1830, he and his disciples unfurled the French revolutionary flag on the Ochterloney Monument in Calcutta. Derozio died before he had completed his twenty-third year. But such was the Charisma of his intellect, personality, and character that a band of brilliant young students gathered enthusiastically round him. They came to be known collectively as Young Bengal. After their master's death these disciples of his carried forward faithfully the progressive political and social ideas and activities commenced during the brief, but brilliant span of Derozios life. Henry Louis Vivian Derozio was such an amazing teacher of the youth that had he been spared to complete even his thirtieth year he would have taken his place by the side of Socrates of Athens, and Peter Abelard of Paris.

We have seen above how the French Revolution influenced both Ram Mohun and De-Rozio. A few more instances of how European history and example inspired Indian nationalists and patriots may be cited. Jogendranath vidyabhuson was a Bengali Deputy Magistrate like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. But to instil nationalism and patriotism into the heart af young Bengalis he wrote in Bengali the lives of Mazzini, and Garibaldi. Surendranath Banerjee lectured to the students about

Mazzini, his message, and burning patriotism. A Bengal journal dubbed Surendranath as "that hot-headed disciple of Mazzini". Sister Nivedita gave away her personal copy of the life of Mazzini to young Bengali revolutionaries for perusal and circulation. Sister Nivedita (Margaret Noble), the Versatile disciple of Swami Vivekanand, was herself Irish, and a zealous inspirer of the earliest batch of Bengali revolutionaries. The young Indians who wanted to strike violent blows at the British drew their inspiration from Russian nihilists also. Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and Mrs-Annie Besant started the Indian Home Rule League following the example of the Irish Catholics. The word, "boycott" so frequently heard in course of India's national struggle, was borrowed from Irish history.

How much India's political consciousness and nationalism bear the stamp of the West is concretely exemplified by an apparently paradoxical phenomenon. All the big leaders of the Indian national struggle, barring, perhaps, Moulana Abul Kalam Azad. and Khan Abdul Gaffar, had very solid English education ; almost all of them had their higher education in England itself. Sri Aurobindo Ghosh and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru were educated in England since boyhood ; and a few of them, like Deshapriya Jatindra Mohan Sen Gupta, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, M. N. Roy (who had, at least, two—the second after divorcing the first), and Dr. Khan Sahib (elder brother of the Frontier Gandhi), had European wives.

National Press, And National Leaders :

But the most powerful exponent of the new political ideas from the West was the national press. It disseminated these ideas among the educated Indians. The same task was performed by the national leaders from public platforms. In the early days of the national struggle, and even afterwards the national leaders, and the national press were closely identified. Most important national leaders had a Journal of their own ; and most Journals were run by important political leaders. The

realisation by Indian leaders of the supreme value and importance of the press in the public life of a country was also due to Western example.

We have seen Raja Ram Mohun Roy had his own Bengali, and Persian or Farsi papers. De Rozio started in February, 1829, through his Academic Association, the English weekly, Parthenon. But it was almost immediately banned by the authorities of the Hindu College for the revolutionary views expressed in the Journal. After his removal from Hindu College De Rozio started his own evening daily, East India on the 1st June, 1831. But alas ! De Rozio passed away on the 26th December, 1831.

The venerable Brahmo patriarch, Devendranath Tagore had the Tattwabodhini Patrika with which, for some time, were associated Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Akshoy Kumar Dutt. Jyotirindranath Tagore, an elder brother of poet Rabindranath, said that the first seeds of nationalism were sown by the articles which Akshoy Kumar Dutt wrote in the Tattwabodhini Patrika.

In 1872 Bankim Chandra Chatterjee started the famous Journal, Bangadarshan, which dealt in depth with literary, cultural, social, religious, Political, and economic problems that confronted the country. 7

The number of Journals in India which discussed mainly political news, and political measures and matters grew rapidly ; their popularity and influence spread remarkably, and the political power of the press had to be reckoned with. The British Government replied with a series of repressive measures to control and gag the national press. We have already discussed the press Ordinance of 1823. Lord Lytton's notorious Vernacular press Act came in 1878. This was, however, repealed by Viceroy Ripon in 1882.

Mention may be made here of only a few prominent newspapers and journals of a markedly political character. The list is merely illustrative, and not at all exhaustive.

In Calcutta in January, 1853 appeared the Hindoo Patriot. This was really the organ of the British Indian Association. Harish Chandra Chatterjee was its first renowned editor. He was the tireless and fearless champion of the oppressed indigo cultivators against the rapacity and atrocities of the British indigo planters. On his death in 1862, the redoubtable journalist Kristodas Pal became the editor.

One of the foremost patriotic and nationalist journals of India was the Amrita Bazar Patrika, edited and run by the two brothers—Sisir Kumar, and Motilal Ghosh. A patriotic and nationalist Bengali journal was the Hitavadi, edited successively by two brave servants of their motherland—Kaliprasanna Kavyavisarad, and Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar. The distinguished patriot of Bengal, Krishna Kumar Mitra owned and edited the Bengali weekly, Sanjivani. Under the proprietorship and editorship of the great Surendranath Banerjea the Bengalee became the most powerful English daily of Bengal. Two gifted ladies of the illustrious Tagore family—poet Rabindranath's sister, Swarna Kumari Devi, and her daughter, Saraladevi Chaudhurani edited the Bengali journal, Bharati.

Bombay, and particularly Poona could boast of a number of nationalist newspapers and journals. In 1851 Dadabhai Naoroji started his Gujarati weekly, Rast—Goitar (Truth Teller) Another important Bombay paper was Indu Prakash, in which appeared Sri Aurobinda Ghosh's first political essays—New Lamps for Old written from Baroda. The paper was, then, being edited by K. G. Daspande, a Cambridge friend of Sri Amobindas. Among other Bombay journals were the Pravakar, and Mumbai Vaibhav.

Poona similarly had her Poona Vaibhav. The Anglo-Marathi weekly, Sudharak had as its editor Gopal Krishna Gokhle for four years. The Maharashtra Mitra was an important newspaper of Poona. But the pride of place among the Poona journals was occupied by those founded by Lokmanya Tilak and his friends. In 1881 were started two

newspapers by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and G. C. Agarcar. The Mahratta in English, and Kesari in Marathi. In 1898 Tilak's close associate, Shivram Mahadeo Paranjpe started the fiery and extremist Marathi weekly, Kal.

The indefatigable national leader, G. Subramanya Iyer was associated with the two leading journals of Madras—the English Hindu, and the vernacular Swadesh Mitram. Anand Charlu, who presided over the seventh annual session of the Congress held at Nagpur in 1891, edited the Peoples Magazine. Two other local language papers of the Madras presidency were the Andhra Prakasika, and the Kerala Patrika.

Uttar Pradesh had Advocate, Hindusthani, and Azad.

Among northern Indian newspapers the most outstanding was the Tribune of Lahore, founded by that prince of patriots Sardar Dayal Singh Majithia. Under a succession of able Bengali editors it maintained a strong nationalist character. Another important journal of the same type was the Punjabee of Lala Lajpat Rai. Two other northern papers were the Akhbar-i-Am, and the Koh-i-Noor

The phenomenal expansion of the press in India in the nineteenth Century will be apparent from the statistics quoted below,—

In the year 1885-86, the number of Vernacular papers was : 104 in Bombay Presidency ; North-West Frontier Province and Oudh (modern Uttar Pradesh)—72 ; Bengal—54, Madras—29. Total number of newspapers in India (excluding Punjab) : English—127 ; Vernacular—277. Punjab had a total of 67 newspapers for both English and Vernacular.

India's national struggle for independence started with one splendid asset—a fearless, fiery, irrepressible, patriotic national press. No body of men did so much to sow the seeds of nationalism and patriotism in Indian hearts than the devoted band of journalists in the country. Threats, pressure, fines, forfeiture, incarceration to which they were continually subjected by the British authorities could not suppress, or stifle their

national and patriotic ardour. They broadcast through their columns the new gospel of nationalism and patriotism among their people and they carried out their mission with undunted faith and unremitting zeal. Indeed, the national struggle started with far more vigour and boldness in the press than on the platform of the Indian National Congress.

Western Rationalism :

Let us now turn to the other precious invisibles imported from the West. One such was Western rationalism—the scientific and critical way of judging things and institutions, social and religious customs and practices. The religious, and social reforms spearheaded by eminent Indians in the nineteenth century bear the mark of Western rationalism. The Hindus of India are congenitally anti-rational, and the Mullah-Moulavi-ridden Muslims of India are fanatical and irrational.

The picture of Hindu society at the close of the eighteenth century with such prevailing customs and practices as child-marrige, polygamy, burning of widows on the funeral pyre of husbands (Sati), enforced widowhood of women, female infanticide, human sacrifices, rigidity of caste, seclusion, suppression, and ignorance inflicted on woman, ban imposed on sea-voyages demonstrate conclusively how horribly anti-rational is the attitude of the Hindu mind. Western rationalism lighted up a land darkened by superstition and prejudices, insane and inhuman injunctions and inhibitions.

Writes the eminent historian, Jadu Nath Sircar :

“On our hoplessly decadent society the rational progressive spirit of Europe struck with irresistible force”. (India through the Ages).

But let us take up first the problem of religious reform. The challenge of proselytising and rigidly monotheistic Islam had forced the mediaeval Hindu reformers like Nanak and Chaitanya to Jettison the weakest parts of Hindu religion, and social system—idolatry and the multitudinous Hindu pantheon,

and the caste system. Faced with the inroads of Christianity, and the Christian missionaries Raja Ram Mohun, and Dayanand Saraswati had to do likewise—drop idolatry and the multiplicity of gods and goddesses, and the caste-system. But there is a significant difference between the two sets of reformers. Nanak, and Chaitanya based their reformed creeds on the sentiments of 'Bhakti' (reverent faith), and 'Prem' (love). Ram Mohun and Dayanand's teachings were based on rational Judgement, and critical analysis.

Ram Mohun's worship of the formless 'Brahman' spoken of in the upanishads, was grounded purely on reason. His own morals and life-style were the very reverse of those universally associated with those of a religious reformer. Think of the morals and lifestyle of a Guru Nanak, Kabir, or Chaitanya and those of Raja Ram Mohun ; He himself did not have, and could not make to others a moral appeal. Hence, he relied solely on reason, and rational appeal to preach his new faith. Dayanand Saraswati, even though he did not have an English education, and conformed to the traditional character of a religious reformer, could not depart from the Zeit-Geist, spirit of the age, and his activities and preachings also breathe of rationalism, and humanism. He was born in the small state of Morvi, in Kathiawar in 1824. His original name was Mulji Shankar. Dayanand founded the Arya Samaj in the Punjab in 1875. He was Poisoned to death by an assassin in 1883. While Ram Mohun's Brahmo Samaj was confined to the intellectual elite, Dayanand's Arya Samaj had a far greater mass appeal among the people of northern India. But Dayanand also arrived at his religious views through reasoned Judgement and critical analysis. He also denounced idolatry and caste. He vehemently assailed the Puranic conception of Hinduism, and harked back to the purity of the Vedic days. Dayanand's Arya Samaj was a major socio-religious influence in India of the nineteenth century. It was founded on reason and protest. That is why Dayanand is sometimes called "India's Martin Luther".

The rationalistic outlook towards social and religious matters was the unique gift of Henry Louis Vivian De Rozio to his devoted disciples.

Western Humanism :

Another important induction from the West was what we may describe as either utilitarianism—seeking the greatest good of the greatest number—or Humanism. Religious charity is undoubtedly, a part of the Hindu tradition : giving alms to holy men ; opening ‘Sadabratas’—free places of board and lodge for ascetics and pilgrims ; building Dharmasalas, or rest-houses for pilgrims in holy places were part of the spiritual chore of well-to-do Hindus. Some also endowed—“tols”, or village “pathshalas”, where the Brahmin was the Pundit, or teacher. Among the Muslims was the very commendable holy injunction that a portion of every man’s income should be given away for the welfare of brothers-in-faith.

All such charitable acts of the Hindus were directed towards one aim—advance reservation of a comfortable berth in Heaven for the donor. form this earth. But while the Hindus believed in service to holy men they did not believe in service to their ordinary fellow-beings. There was, of course, that well-known expression—“Daridra Narayaner Seva”—service to the poor who were to be regarded as Narayan, or God. But actually it come to giving scanty alms to a beggar, or feeding the starving at “Sradh”, or funeral ceremony of the rich departed.

The idea of organized service to society, or humanity came to India from the West. The ideal Hindu view of life was to forsake family, society, and the world, and plunge into spiritual meditation, or esoteric exercises in a secluded and solitary corner of a forest, or cave of a rock. Such an attitude to life and the world could not possibly make people very enthusiastic about the betterment of society, or social conditions, or about improvement of the lot of their fellow-beings.

Here also Raja Ram Mohun Roy stands forth as the herald of the new era. Deeply imbued with the rationalism and humanism of the West, by dint of his extraordinary genius, Ram Mohun not only denounced Hindu idolatry,—the most heroic act he ever did—and enjoined the worship of the formless “Brahman”, but through his Brahmo Samaj, founded in 1828, he stood against caste, child-marriage, and exclusion of women. He also advocated the education of women, and their right to property. Ram Mohun and Dwarkanath supported the abolition of “Sati”. But the credit for the banning of the immolation of widows—enforced, or Voluntary—on the funeral pyre of their husbands should go to Lord William Bentinck and his government. Hindu widows were no longer permitted to burn themselves after 1829. Drowning to death female infants, and human sacrifice to the Gods were prohibited through legislation by the British rulers, as such practices appeared to Western eyes as too revolting and beastly.

As an important part of this Humanism, Indian national leaders everywhere realised the supreme need of spreading education, especially English education and European Knowledge among their countrymen. When the Government proposed in 1823 to open centres of Sanskrit learning in Tirhut, Nadia, and Calcutta, Ram Mohun opposed it vehemently and advocated, instead, teaching of the western sciences like Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, and Anatomy. Ram Mohun himself founded the Anglo—Hindu school in Calcutta. Ram Mohun shines as the morning star of the modern India dawn—the beacon and path-finder of the Indian people into a new age and a new world.

After Ram Mohun the cause of social reform was taken up by the great Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar—rationalist to the core, one of World’s greatest humanists, and a confirmed atheist. Vidyasagar was as saintly an atheist as the far-famed British savant, John Stuart Mill. He did not waste a minute of his time, jampacked with his philanthropic and humanitarian

services to his fellow-men, over religious worship, or observances, spiritual meditation or discourse, or esoteric exercises, or rituals. Nor did he speak a word either in supporting, or denouncing British rule over India. Work, ceaseless and tireless work for human welfare was the breath of his life. Unfailing service and help to the afflicted, and unstinted charities to the distressed was his life's daily routine. The miseries of Hindu women moved his noble heart deeply. The cruel fate of Hindu widows debarred from marrying again grieved him very much. Against calumnies, threats, and abuses, and against tremendous opposition from the orthodox, he fought heroically for the remarriage of Hindu widows. His efforts were crowned with success by the passage of the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856.

Next he started a campaign against polygamy, practised particularly by kulin Brahmins. From lists compiled by Vidyasagar, it is seen that some kulin Brahmins of very meagre means had married from fifty to eighty wives. Apart from the misery of these wives, this evil practice was a prolific source of adultery, clandestine abortion, bastardy, and prostitution. Though in this case Government refused to help him with a legislation banning the system, Vidyasagar, through appeals to Brahmins, and through mobilising public opinion, succeeded in abating this awful nuisance considerably. Vidyasagar spent a lot of money out of his own pocket over this campaign.

Iswar chandra Vidyasagar's attitude to western education was amazingly radical and revolutionary. Indeed, any Hindu revivalists head will reel with shock at his words.

As Principal of the Sanskrit College in Colcutta he wrote : "That the Vedanta, or Sankhya are false systems of philosophy is no more a matter of dispute..... while teaching these in the Sanskrit course we should oppose them by sound philosophy in the English course to counteract their influence."

What Vidyasagar did for the spread of education among his people will be evident from the figures given below :

He was actively associated with the establishment of over one hundred Bengali Pathshalas (Village grammar schools) started under Viceroy Hardinge. In close collaboration with Lieut-Governor of Bengal, Frederick Halliday Vidyasagar, through superhuman efforts established, between August, 1855 and January, 1856 Twenty model Schools-5 each in the districts of Nadia, Hooghly, Burdwan, and Midnapur. When John Drinkwater Bethune, Law Member of the Governor-General's Council, founded in Calcutta in 1849 a girls school, Vidyasagar readily agreed to act as its Honorary Secretary. When Bethune died suddenly and prematurely, Vidyasagar plunged into the work for girls education. Between November, 1857 and May 1858 Vidyasagar established 35 girls' schools. Besides, through his personal efforts Vidyasagar established the Metropolitan College in Calcutta, which has since been rightly named after him. In Birsingha, his native village in the district Midnapur, he founded a free High English school.

The magnificent tribute paid to Vidyasagar by the great Bengali poet, Michael Madhusudan Dutt is no poetic exaggeration.

Michael said of Vidyasagar :

“He has the genius and wisdom of an ancient sage, the energy of an Englishman, and the heart of a Bengali mother” Dayanand Saraswati, founder of the Arya Samaj was the most potent Hindu revivalist of the nineteenth century. But humanitarian work was, as important to him as religion. He advocated remarriage of widows, and women's education, and denounced caste and “purdah”, or seclusion of women. He established the Paropakarini Sabha (philanthropic Society) and endowed it with all his properties. For administering it he appointed twenty—three trustees, including among them such men as the Maharana of Udaipur, Shyamaji Krishna Varma, Mahadeo Govind Ranade.

Even Swami Vivekanand, the fire-brand Hindu revivalist founded the Ramkrishna Mission, after the name of his great teacher, Ramkrishna Paramhansa of Dakshineswar, on the model of the European Christian missions. Service to the suffering and the afflicted is the work of the Ram Krishna Mission. Recently the Mission is trying to do the work which the famous Society of Jesus, founded by the Spanish ex-soldier Ignatius Loyola, has been doing all over the world during several centuries—in imparting superior and better education to children.

Arya Samajists also established Dayanand Arya Vidyalayas, or schools, and colleges, and Arya kanya Vidyalayas, or girls schools, in various towns and cities of northern India,

Keshab Chandra Sen, the Brahmo evangelist also did much for spread of education, specially among women. Keshub was also keen on improving the lot of women in other respects. Unfortunately, whatever may have been his words to British audiences in England, Keshub Chandra Sen here in his own country was politically retrograde and reactionary. He incorporated in the pledge of the Nava Bidhan Brahmo Samaj an article expressing allegiance to the British Crown, and Government of India.

In Bombay, Behramji Khurshedji Gandhi, Jamshetji Jeejibhoy Dadabhai Naoroji, and others launched on a voluntary mission in 1849 to spread education among girls. The efforts of the Poona leaders for humanitarian work, and for spread of education were remarkable.

Western Materialism :

Western materialism, in contradistinction to glorified Indian spiritualism, simply means a greater care for the comforts and pleasures of life on this side of the grave, and a greater attention to the realities of the physical world. Indian spiritualism dwells everlastingly on the bliss to come after death, and is absorbed in speculation over an imagined other world, or after-

existence.

Great as are his services to his people, and multifarious and tremendous as are his achievements, Raja Ram Mohun Roy is himself more important than all he did. He is India's first Modern Man, and a Complete Modern Man at that. He flung away like a pair of old tattered shoes the hoary Hindu gospel of shunning women and wealth. Ram Mohun had simultaneously several mistresses, including a Mohammedan one, and, perhaps, also a British Christian one. He amassed great wealth by means fair and foul. He lived in magnificent material comfort and luxury, washing down his evening cuisine with the choicest foreign brews. Ram Mohun had not only a Muslim mistress, he employed Muslim Baboorchis, or cooks for preparing his Mughlai and European dishes.

Maharshi (Great Hermit) Devendranath Tagore-noble, serene, and pure-took under his fostering care the Brahmo Samaj after the demise of Ram Mohun. But the materialism of the West had its stamp on his life-style also. The Great Hermit of the nineteenth century did not live, except during his last few years in Santiniketan, in a sequestered sylvan retreat, but in his ancestral palace in Jorasanko, Calcutta, surrounded by his eight sons, and six daughters, and a host of other relations with a large retinue of assistants and servants. From the writings of Abanindranath Tagore we learn he really lived in an aristocratic style amidst reasonable material comforts. Like Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Devendranath Tagore maintained rigid silence over British rule in India.

The Western materialist view of life finds remarkable manifestation in Keshub Chandra Sen. Although he was Brahmanand (Steeped in the Beatitude of the Brahman) he chose as husbands for his daughters the rulers of Indian States. And, even though both the bride and the groom were underage, as per Keshub's own New Dispensation, he celebrated their marriage in the presence of a Hindu Icon. Why did he do so?

Obviously for the material comfort and happiness of his daughters in this world. A very sensible line of conduct for a loving father. Here material and mundane considerations of the father Keshub Chandra Sen got the better of the Brahmanand.

Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, though an uncompromising votary of Western rationalism and Western humanism, felt no attraction towards Western materialism. He lived a life of Spartan simplicity. conforming to the traditional Indian style of living of a Brahmin Pundit, or Teacher, exemplified by the legendary Ramai Pandit, who passed his life surpassing happy on a bowl of rice and soup of Tamarind leaves, cooked by his wife. Truly, may one gaze in wonder at Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and exclaim Ecce Homo-Behold the Man !

Western Modus Operandi :

Another important lesson which the Indians learnt from the West was the value and necessity of organization, of concerted collective effort. Religious organizations Indians had in galore from ancient times. Some trade associations in the nature of guilds ancient India could boast of. The new lesson was the forming of associations for achieving or promoting desired objectives in the cultural, social, and political, spheres of the national life. Bengal was seized in the nineteenth Century with a craze for forming associations to further every conceivable aspect of national development.

Impact of the West on Indian Languages and Literature :

Strange as it may seem, the impact of the West fostered even the growth of Indian languages, specially their prose part. The Western Christian missionaries were intensely determined to convert the Indian masses to their faith. They could propagate their gospel among the Indian people only through the regional common dialects. They wanted to preach their faith through simple, easily intelligible words, that is, through popu-

ler veracular speech. This gave a great fillip to the growth of Indian prose writing and literature, Compilation of simple grammars, and lexicons.

The Baptist missionaries, from Serampore near Calcutta during ten years translated and printed the Bible, or parts thereof in thirty-one Indian languages. They also brought out the Bengali newspaper, Samachar Darpan, which was the second in point of time, and the first in importance among the earliest Bengali journals.

In A. D. 1800 was established in Calcutta the Fort William college to acquaint British freshers into the Civil Service, and new British Writers of the East India Company with the languages of the natives. Pundits from all over India were brought into this college. The Pundits started writing text-books in prose for the benefit of their British pupils. Pandit Mritunjay Vidyalonkar and others wrote a number of such books in Bengali prose ; Lallu Lal ; and Sadal Misra, associated with this College made pioneer contributions to Hindi prose literature.

The Indian Renaissance :

So far our eyes had been turned Westward ; let us now turn our gaze homeward. The Christian missionaries with their dogged Zeal and determination posed a great threat to both Hinduism and Islam. The cry of religion in danger had never failed to rouse people to beastly frenzy. Here was a case of religion in danger, and it roused both the Hindus and Muslims. The Hindus traditionally shrink from violence ; the Muslims are prone to it. The dangerous Wahabi movement among Muslims, in course of which an acting Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court, J. P. Norman (killed on September 20, 1871 by Wahabi Abdulla), and a Viceroy of India, Lord Mayo (killed in the Andamans on February 8, 1872 by Wahabi Sher Ali) were assassinated, was, perhaps, launched to counter this new threat to Islam from Christianity.

What was the Hindu reaction to this new threat will be recounted presently. But quite apart from the menace of Christian missionaries, many thoughtful and patriotic Indians felt that the new ideological waves from the West were about to wash away the ancient culture and civilisation, ideas and ideals of India ; they threatened to denationalise the Indian people. The new liquor from the West was going to people's, head and they were slavishly aping Western dress, manners and habits. They were damning everything Indian, and cutting off their roots in the native soil. To the sedate and conservative national leaders and thinkers the ways and actions of the neophytes of Western models threatened to ruin, the ancient and glorious Indian society, culture and religion.

That this apprehension on their part was not altogether unfounded is borne out by some facts. Michael Madhusudan Dutt, the great Bengali poet became a convert to Christianity. A wellknown remark of his was : "We must speak in English, think in English, and even dream in English." He first married a British lady, and then a French one and lived in purely European style. He wrote his first poem Captive Lady in English. Even the great Bankim Chandra Chatterjee wrote his first novel, Raj Mohan's wife in English. De Rozio's disciples, Young Bengal in the first flush of their exuberance began to hate and denounce everything Indian. A most striking example of this extreme adoration of the West was none other than the father of the illustrious Sri Aurobinda Ghosh. Dr. K. D. Ghosh, who was one of the earliest Indians to go to England for higher education. He wanted his son, Aurobinda to be educated in an English environment. So the son grew up ignorant of his mother-tongue. Aurobinda was first sent to Darjeeling to a school meant for European children only. At the age of seven Aurobinda was sent to England where he studied for Twelve years. Whenever his wife would be expecting Dr. K. D. Ghosh would send her to England so that the child might be British-born.

Raja Ram Mohun Roy, in the major role of his multi-purposed life, was the pioneer of the Indian renaissance. But he was reasonable and sensible. He realised that Hindu religion and society required reformation. To counter the filthy denunciation of Hinduism by the Christian missionaries, he resuscitated the pure and noble religion of the Upanishads, the worship of the formless Brahman, and put it into current vogue through the Brahmo Samaj.

Ram Mohun published his first tract against Hindu idolatry and in support of monotheism, written in Persian and entitled *Tuhfat-Ul-Muwahidin*, in 1804. In 1815 Ram Mohun composed two prose treatises in Bengali—*Vedantasar*, and *Vedantagrantha*—in which he explained his new Brahmo faith. Ram Mohun also established in the same year in Calcutta the *Atmiya Sabha* (Kindred Spirits Association) for study and discussion of Vedanta, and propagation of Hindu monotheism. With the same object in view, Ram Mohun started his own organs—*Brahmanical Magazine* in English, and *Brahman Sevadhi* in Bengali.

In 1828, two years before he sailed for England, from where he never returned, the great Raja Ram Mohun Roy did his life's greatest and most abiding work—the establishment of the Brahmo samaj. We have seen Dayanand Saraswati through his Arya samaj propagated the religion of the Vedas, rejecting puranic Hinduism.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the giant litterateur of Bengal was a powerful leader of the Indian Renaissance. In his youth he was an ardent admirer of European rationalism and humanism. But in his later years he began to emphasize the deep spiritual springs of the Hindu faith, philosophy, and culture. He envisioned Mother India as embodying in herself all the divine goddesses. Bankim admitted frankly that we got our rationalism from the West through English education. But he eulogised the deeply spiritual and moral tradition of the Indian people, and called on his countrymen to serve the motherland.

with the strength born out of the ancient Indian virtues of sacrifice and celibacy. Bankim was definitely against foreign domination, though as a Government employee he had to camouflage his attitude under allegories, and innuendoes, and had often to speak his mind through past events.

The Maharashtrian Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar's view was akin to Bankim Chandra's. He appreciated the value and importance of English education, which he likened to "Tigress 'milk". But in his 'Nibandh—Mala he attacked not only foreign missionaries, but also native reformers, and especially those who aped Western manners and customs. He also ridiculed the idea that the Britishers were here to do good to Indians.

Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak also valued Western education, but he wanted to adapt it to Indian needs. He deeply cherished Hindu religious tenets, philosophical traditions, and moral values. But he sought to utilise the religious revivalism as a handmaid for the political awakening of the people. Such, however, is the innate anti-rationalism of the Hindu religion and Hindu philosophy that even a man of Tilak's calibre could not escape its contagion. He campaigned against the Age of Consent Bill in 1890. Next, he started the Cow Protection League.

Unlike Tilak, the great Swami Vivekanand wanted the religious resurgence to keep aloof of political currents. No doubt his was the most powerful voice for revival of Hindu spirituality and Indo—Aryan heritage. But from the viewpoint of the national struggle some of his eloquent outbursts were not helpful. Take for instance the following passages :

"Let foreigners come and fill the country with their armies, never mind. up India ; and conquer the world with your spirituality."

And,

"England we shall conquer, we shall possess through the power of spirituality."

Further,

“Conquest of England, Europe, and America—this should be our supreme Mantra at present—in it lies the well-being of our Country.”

Such utterances sound like a delirium of hyperbolic braggadocio. The great Swamiji ignored completely the unsavoury facts of history. Hindu spirituality never conquered any territory outside of India, except, perhaps, some islands of South-East Asia, which also, later, became totally Islamic. The message of Gautam Buddha once conquered almost the whole of Asia. On the contrary, in spite of the much—vaunted Hindu spirituality, the holy land of Aryavarta was conquered again, and again by not—so—spiritual foreign conquerors from across mountains and seas through seven centuries, and a half. Finally, world—conquering Hindu spirituality notwithstanding, a good portion of sacred Aryavarta became Pakistan—holy land of the Muslims. This reminds us of the sack of the temple of Somnath by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. The Brahmin priests fondly believed that Lord Somnath will arise and crush “the Mlecchas”, or unholly Mussims. No spiritual miracle happened, and Sultan Mahmud with a mighty stroke of his scimitar smashed to pieces the Idol of Somnoth.

But the extremest Indian reaction to Western influence was expressed in four lines of verse written by a Bengali poet, Iswar Gupta, who lived from 1806 to 1858.

“With a brother’s love in your heart
 Look to your Countrymen,
 with love-light in your eyes ;
 Let us tend with affection
 The dogs of our own land,
 Laying aside foreign gods.”

This is, no doubt, an unfortunate swing to the other extreme away from the extreme where Dr. K.D. Ghosh stood.

Militant Nationalism :

Nationalism, patriotism, love of liberty are sentiments, and are aroused by sentimental appeals, and not so much by cold reason. What is known as militancy, or extremism was injected into the incipient Indian nationalism by the leaders of the Indian renaissance and Hindu revivalism. Their assertions about the excellence and superiority of Hindu religion, philosophy, culture and civilisation, and their glorification of the Indo-Aryan' past achievements engendered in the hearts of their countrymen patriotic and nationalist fervour. To be a little more concrete, the knowledge of the scientific achievements of Newton or Lavoisier could enlighten the minds of Indians, but could not ignite patriotic glow in their hearts. But when they heard of the achievements of the ancient Indian scientists, Aryabhatta, and Varamihir they could have a feeling of patriotic pride over them. Similarly, study of Chaucer, and Shakespeare might enthrall their mind, but could not bring to their hearts the national pride which the beauties of Kalidas, or Bhababhuti could excite.

The Indian renaissance, and Hindu revivalism, as it was essentially anti-west, fanned anti British feelings in Indian hearts, and inspired militant nationalism and political extremism. Many among the earliest batch of political leaders and workers came from the Brahmo Samaj, or Prarthana Samaj. Dayanand Saraswati and his Arya Samaj made a tremendous impression on the people of the north, and caused a political awakening along with the religious and social. Such Well-known national leaders as Lala Hansraj, Lala Lajpat Rai, Lala Munshiram (Swami Sraddhanand), and Bhai Parmanand received their inspiration from Dayanand and the Arya Samaj.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee stands out as a Tower of strength to the Indian renaissance and Hindu revivalism. His writings, including his immortal song, Bande Mataram, which became India's National Anthem, were the fountain-heads from which the revolutionary youth of Bengal drew their patriotic

ardour and their spirit of supremest sacrifice.

Swami Vivekanand avoided political involvement, and advised the Ram Krishna Mission to stay away from politics. His Charismatic Irish disciple, Sister Nivedita was compelled to sever her connexion with the Ram Krishna Mission shortly after her Master's death because of her political activities.

Even so, some of his stirring addresses to his countrymen, clothed in the characteristic volcanic eloquence of the cyclonic monk, could not fail to inflame young hearts with a burning sense of patriotism and nationalism.

Thundered forth Swamiji :

“So give up being a slave For the next fifty years this alone shall be our key-note—this our great Mother-land. Let all other vain Gods disappear for that time from our mind.”

And then, that oft-quoted purple passage in Bengali—a passionate exhortation to his countrymen to unite as one people.

“Oh hero : be courageous : Proudly proclaim I am an Indian—every Indian is my brother ! Proclaim illiterate Indians, poor Indians, Brahmin Indians, Chandal Indians are my brothers...
...
say brother India's earth is my Heaven, India's well-being is my well-being.”

In 1905 an ascetic Agamya Guru Paramhansa went about telling people in Western India to stand up against the British Raj. Vinayak Damadar Savarkar and a group of young students at Poona were inspired by his teaching and founded a revolutionary association.

The upshot of it all was that in India a strong religio-political nationalism grew up. It was also frankly and predominantly a Hindu Nationalism. To be fair to the founding fathers of the Indian National Congress it has to be

noted that this development happened in spite of them. They worked scrupulously to nurture the Congress as a purely political organization keeping out of it all religious and social questions.

Patriotic Poets and Writers :

The misery and degradation of the country under foreign rule, and the yearning to be a free people were expressed poignantly and passionately by a host of patriotic poets and writers in every Indian language and literature. But their names are numerous and their contribution immense. To recount them would mean writing half the history of the different literatures of India. Neither the size of this volume, nor the competence of its author are equal to that monumental task. Here discretion is the better part of valour. We have to be content with just a general mention of this very important and powerful contributory factor to the growth of nationalism and patriotism among the people of India.

Culturally, the grandest synthesis between the new Western thesis and the ancient Indian counter-thesis was achieved by the celebrated Tagore family of Calcutta, who blended into a glorious harmony the modern enlightenment of the West with the eternal verities of Aryavarta.

Genesis of Indian Economic Nationalism :

The intellectual and cultural gusts from the West produced national consciousness and political awakening in India. But it also brought in a new danger. Some of the Indians who have had the highest level of Western education became fanatical votaries of Britishers, and everything British. They could see nothing but inestimable blessings accruing to Indians from British rule. Throughout the nineteenth century their number was not inconsiderable. To utter a word against the British was anathema and blasphemy to them. This illusion, delusion, and hallucination had to be dispelled.

Even the Indian Masses seemed to be reconciled to British rule, because inspite of their poverty and hardship they had a peaceful and secure existence under the British regime. They had a frightful memory of the turmoils and turbulence of pre-British days, particulary of the plunder and rapine of Mahratta bargirs, and the depredations of Thuggies and Pindaris. Little could they realise that this Pax Brittanica was for them really the peace of the grave. The sinister and subtle policy and activities of British imperialism had to be unmasked to the people of India. They had to be apprised of data and statistics relating to the pitiful economic plight of the country under British rule.

Indians had to foot the bill for the upkeep of a large body of highly paid British civilians, and a heavy contingent of expensive British troops, whose only function was to keep Indians under British heels. The people of India had to bear the huge expense of foreign wars fought for the maintenance and expansion of the British Empire.

The British indigo planters, through threats, force, and allurements, were compelling Indian farmers to cultivate indigo plants. But the poor Indian peasants were receiving paltry pittances for their labour, while their British exploiters were reaping huge profits by selling much-prized indigo in European markets. The story in the British-owned tea-gardens was the same or worse. The Indian coolies in those tea gardens had to suffer restrictions and humiliations which really reduced them to the condition of bond-slaves. The rich coal-fields in Bengal and Bihar were owned mostly by Britishers. The hard-worked miners did their perilous job on only starvation wages, while the British owners lifted huge profits. In short, the Britishers were eating up the fat of the land.

Through customs and Tariff regulations and the policy of freetrade Britishers were exporting to their homeland raw-materials and food stuff, procured at cheap rates, to feed British manufacture and industries, and British labour in

England. They were, at the same time, throttling and squeezing out India's indigenous industries through foul and cruel methods in order to monopolise the Indian market for goods of English make. The economic exploitation of India, and the Indians was the motif of British imperial rule over India.

Exposing the Character of British Exploitation :

Luckily for the Indian people a galaxy of highly gifted and intensely patriotic sons of India produced a series of masterpieces which laid bare this most sinister and insidious aspect of British Indian imperialism. The most penetrating and impressive among such works was **Poverty and Un-British Rule in India** by Dadabhai Naoroji, the principal architect of the Indian National Congress. The book showed Dadabhai's extraordinary grasp and knowledge of every sphere of India's national life. He also revealed in it his vast learning, powers of research, and his burning patriotism. The compilation was a statistical masterpiece. Dadabhai did not mince words, and was forthright in his denunciation of British rule. He declared : "Indians were mere helots. They were worse than American slaves, for the latter were, at least, taken care of by their masters, whose property they were." He had the courage to characterise British rule as "an everlasting, everyday increasing foreign invasion, utterly, though gradually, destroying the country." So far as the expression of anti-British opinion and feeling went, the most extremist of Indian leaders could hardly go beyond those words of Dadabhai Naoroji.

Mahadeo Govind Ranade's Economic Essays were also an important contribution on the subject.

A famous work in this behalf was the authoritative and revealing Economic History of British India by that patriotic and versatile civilian, R. C. Dutt. This book opened the eyes of educated Indians to the carefully camouflaged British machinations through which the economic exploitation of India in the interest of England was being effected. Dutt pointed out that this was the motive behind British rule over India.

In a later stage of the national struggle the phrase economic exploitation of India was on the lips of every Congress leader and worker. Aurobinda Ghosh said it would have been very difficult to explain to the people the efficacy of boycott of British goods, but for this publication. Incidentally, R. C. Dutt presided over the Lucknow session of the Congress in 1899.

But, perhaps, in this sphere the writings of a less known patriot, Bhola Nath Chandra of Calcutta was more comprehensive and constructive. He wrote a monumental work in five volumes, entitled *A Voice for the Commerce and Manufactures of India*. In 1874, in a series of articles in Mukherjee's Magazine, edited by Sambhu Nath Mukherjee he showed how Britain's free-trade policy was ruining India's industries. He appealed to his countrymen to take the vow that they won't touch British goods, and use only indigenous products. He also gave a call to his countrymen to resolve to resuscitate and develop the ruined crafts and industries of the Country. The writings of Bhola Nath Chandra anticipated entirely the programme of the Swadeshi and Boycott movement of 1905.

Nor should we omit to mention here a remarkable compilation the product of sustained patriotic labour by a remarkable man. Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar was a Marathi, and a devoted disciple of Bal Gangadhar Tilak. He was domiciled in Bihar, and was a good and prolific writer of Bengali. He was born and educated at Baiyyanath Dham or Deogarh in Bihar. He started life there as a teacher. He was excommunicated from Bihar for his political activities. He came to Calcutta, and took to journalism as his career. He was for thirteen years the editor of the Bengali nation list paper, *Hitavadi*. In his publication "Desher Katha" (An Account of the Country), written in Bengali he convincingly exposed the evils of British rule. The Government banned the book. It has to be added that Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar was one of the active spirits in the first batch of secret armed revolutionaries of Bengal.

Bombay and Economic Nationalism :

It is one among the strange ironies of history that the Indian people got their consciousness of political unity, political rights and nationalism from the British through English education. These equipped them to start their struggle for national independence against the British. In the economic sphere Indians learnt of modern industrialisation—the transformation of industry into large-scale mechanised ventures from its development in Britain. The idea of floating joint-stock companies came to India from England. Indians, then, started big industries of their own, and clashed with Britain in the economic and industrial arena.

In Bengal nationalism was intellectual and emotional. The coming clash there between Indian nationalism and British imperialism would be on the political plane. The struggle against British imperialism on the economic front was to start in Bombay with the growth of indigenous industries there.

When the English first began trading in India under license and permission of Mughal Emperors British and Indian merchants transacted business on equal footing. After the British spread their sway over the land the Indian merchants were reduced to the status of underlings to British concerns. Both in Bombay and Calcutta, as elsewhere in India, the native merchants became either purchasing, or selling agents, or brokers of British Commercial houses.

Even so, some of these Indian agents amassed considerable surplus wealth. In Bengal, where the Zemindary system prevailed, merchants with surplus money invested it in landed properties. A few instances will prove the trend there. Joy Kissen Mukherjee of Utarpura, near Calcutta amassed a large fortune as supplier to the British Commissariat. But he invested his money in acquiring landed estates and founded the Ut:arpara Raj family. Another instance is the celebrated Tagore family. Prince Dwarkanath acquired a huge fortune as business partner of British firms. But after him, the Tagores

turned into Zemindars. Other branches of the Tagore family also exchanged lucrative trade for Zemindaries. A third instance was Raghuram Goswami of Scrampore. He was a banian (agent) of the famous British mercantile firm of John Palmer and Company, and amassed great wealth in business. He competed with the East India Company over the purchase of the Danish settlement of Serampore, and offered to pay the price of Twelve lakh rupees fixed by the Danish authorities. But after Raghuram, the Goswamis of Serampore became one of the big Zemindar families of Bengal.

Moreover, the industries that grew up in Bengal were mostly owned by Britishers. Bengal is the home of Jute. Some Jute Mills did spring up on both banks of the Hooghly, adjacent to Calcutta. But they were British concerns. Tea is another important commercial product of Bengal. But the tea-gardens were monopolised by British planters. The rich coal-fields of Raneegunge, and Jharia were also grabbed by Englishmen.

Luckily for Bombay (here by Bombay is denoted the Presidency of Bombay), the picture was different. For one thing, the ryotwari system of land-tenure prevailed there. Investment in land was not as attractive under that system as under the Zemindary settlement of Bengal. Hence, in Bombay people with surplus wealth invested their money in trade and industries.

Western India's great industrial product is cotton. It is grown in abundance in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Cutch and Madhya Pradesh—all within easy reach of Bombay and Ahmedabad. Cheap and abundant labour could be drawn into the industries in Bombay, as the mostly arid soil of Maharashtra and Gujarat afforded scanty subsistence to the peasants.

Bombay had the honour of developing the first Indian-owned large-scale industry—Textile Mills. The pioneers in the industrial field in Bombay were the Parsis. They were followed by Bhatias, and Borah Muslims. Though a very small

minority in the Indian Population, the contribution of Parsis in the making of modern India is immense.

After the Arab victories over the Persians at the battles of Kadisia and Nihavend Persia passed under the rule of the Islamic Arabs. Most Persians had to embrace the faith of their conquerors. But a few families, who cherished their old Zoroastrianism, or fireworship, emigrated to India from time to time. They settled down in Gujarat, and engaged in trade, Commerce and crafts. As the city of Bombay grew up many of them shifted there.

The Parsis were at first agents for buying cotton for British exporters. They were also selling agents for imported British articles. Some of these agents became quite rich and began to trade on their own. They engaged most profitably in the opium trade with China.

In 1856 a Parsi named C. N. Davar started the first Spinning Mill in Bombay. The first Weaving Mill came up in 1860, but most of the Mills were at first Yarn Mills. Their product used to be exported to Rangoon, Hong-Kong, and Japan, but China was the principal customer of Indian yarn and piecegoods.

The American Civil War (1861-1865) proved a bonanza to the Indian Cotton dealers. Till the outbreak of that war, Manchester had imported cotton from America, but that source was now closed. British mills at Manchester had now to depend on Bombay for their supplies of cotton. The Parsi Cotton dealers took full advantage of the situation, and made huge profits.

As a result the number of Textile mills in Bombay shot up to 51 in 1877. Jamshetji Tata founded the big Empress Mills in Nagpur. At the close of the century the number of mills reached 155. Next to the Bombay city area, the largest concentration of Textile mills was in Ahmedabad in Gujarat.

The Japanese, who had been large importers of Indian Yarn, soon began to spin and weave their cloth. This forced the

Bombay mills-owners to develop their Spinning mills into full Textile Mills.

Indians, thus, threw a serious challenge to British capitalists and exploiters on the industrial front. It should be noted that the Indian Empire was ruled in the nineteenth century not only from Westminster, but also from Manchester with its free-trade leaders in the first half, and from Birmingham with Joseph Chamberlain and the cry for imperial preference in the second half.

Under pressure of British free-trade agitators and British manufacturers the Government of India had ultimately to abolish import duties on all British goods, except spirits and salt. Not content with that, in order to corner India's nascent textile industry, they forced the Government of India to impose a custom duty of five per cent on the import of long-staple cotton, essential for the growth of the Indian Textile industry. India did not grow long staple cotton, it had to be imported from Egypt.

To stifle the new-born Indian industry the British vested interests also compelled the Indian Government to levy an excise duty of five per cent on Indian cotton products.

The Parsis were the pioneers in Bombay in not only trade and industry, but also in the fields of education, and cultural, social, and political activities. They had gone all out for Westernisation through the medium of English education. Hence, they shone in the legal and medical professions and also in the educational sphere. Their public leader was the able, patriotic, and sagacious Dadabhai Naoroji. The enlightened Parsis realised that they could not save their infant industries from the onslaught of British imperialism unless they had behind them the support of the entire Indian people. That is why they threw themselves heart and soul into the effort to organize the Indian National Congress.

It is true the Swadeshi movement in Bengal, specially boycott of foreign cloth gave a great fillip to the Textile industry in

the Bombay Presidency. Bengalis often refer to this fact with some petulance. We suffered and the Bombaywallas prospered at our cost, they say. But we should not forget to look to the other side of the shield. Had not the textile mills of Bombay been there, the boycott of foreign cloth might have forced many Indians to go without clothes.

A mention should be made of the great leader of India's Industrial revolution, Jamshetji Tata. It would not be fair for any Indian who takes pride in his own country just to sneer at him as a capitalist, out for profiteering.

Jamshetji Nusserwanji Tata was born at Navasari in the Baroda State. He came over to Bombay at the age of thirteen, and was admitted to the Elphinstone School. After studying there for six years, he joined his father's firm. His father had trade with China. That led Jamshetji to go over to Hong-Kong. Next, he proceeded to Manchester to acquire the know-how about Textile Mills. On returning to India, he started on January 1, 1877 the Empress Cotton Mills at Nagpur.

British foreigners, who till now held the monopoly over carrying the products of Bombay mills to Rangoon, Hong-Kong, and Japan, began to charge exorbitant rates. Jamshetji went to Japan, and arranged for carrying of Bombay products in Japanese Vessels, thus breaking the British monopoly.

Jamshetji's greatest national service to India was the foundation of the Bangalore Research Institute. He laboured hard and long over this project, and himself donated rupees thirty lakhs towards its establishment.

Jamshetji Tata had completed the project and all preliminaries for another great land-mark in India's Industrial history, when he suddenly died in 1904. That was the great enterprise, Tata Iron and Steel works at Jamshedpur, in Bihar. The foundation of the giant steel plant was laid next year, and it went into production in 1907.

Jamshetji Tata should be remembered by Indians with respect as the Father of Industrial India.

VANGUARD OF NEW INDIA

Well-nigh half-a-century before the emergence of an Indian nationalism a full blown, close-knit, and firmly consolidated Bengali nationalism, more precisely Bengali Hindu nationalism had developed. Principally historical, and some geographical factors and circumstances gave the Bengal Hindus a flying start over the other races and provinces of India in the race for progress and modernisation. Nevertheless, the intrinsic merit, character, and aptitude of the Bengali Hindus themselves contributed considerably to make them the Vanguard of the new India, which took shape in course of the nineteenth century of the christian era.

Let us first take up a few geographical factors. While talking of the Bengali Hindu nationalism or of the Renaissance in Bengal or of the New Age in Bengal one should keep his eyes rivetted on Calcutta and its surrounding areas within a radius of twenty-five miles. The city and port of Calcutta was the nerve-centre of new Bengal, nay, of new India.

Within a stretch of twenty-five miles to the north of Calcutta on the west bank of the river Hooghly, had grown up in close proximity the Portuguese settlement at Hooghly, which was replaced by an English settlement when the Portuguese were wiped out from there in 1650 under orders of the Emperor Shah Jehan ; adjacent to it on the south was the Dutch settlement at Chinsurah ; contiguous to it on the south was the French settlement at Chandernagore ; a little further to the south was the Danish settlement at Serampore. Later on sprang up on the east bank of the river the English settlement at Calcutta. Such a compact juxtaposition of so many European nationalities occurred nowhere else in India. All these made their distinct contributions to the new age in Bengal. New light in many fields came first from the Danish settlement in Serampore. The French settlement at Chandernagore provided a rendezvous and shelter for Bengali revolutionaries and political absconders.

The port of Calcutta had as its hinterland the whole of upper India up to the Himalayas—the Heart of Aryavarta. Jute, over which Bengal held world monopoly, was exported through the port of Calcutta. Tea from the gardens in the Dooars was exported through the port of Calcutta. The rich coalfields of Raneegunge and Jharia were easily accessible from the port of Calcutta. Calcutta became the centre of European trade, commerce, and industry in India. Through the port of Calcutta were exchanged between India and the West both commodities and ideas, for the imports into this port included crates of English publications.

Next, we come to the more important historical facts and circumstances. The British victory in the Battle of Plassey in 1757 made the English East India Company the Nawab-makers over Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. The grant of Dewani of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa to the East India company by the Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam II in 1765 gave the British their first administrative foot-hold in India. Calcutta became the principal base, and headquarters of the British power in India, and remained so till 1911.

Hence, both commercially and politically the importance of Calcutta grew fast and it had by far the largest concentration of Britishers, and Europeans in the whole of India. Bengalis of Calcutta had very much earlier, in very much larger number, very much closer contact with Britishers than any other community in India.

The impact of historical events marked out Calcutta as the venue where the commingling, clash, and synthesising of India and the West were to take place first. British traders for expansion and carrying on of their commercial ventures must know the language, manners, and customs of their Indian partners. The new British rulers of the land for purposes of their administration must acquaint themselves with the language and literature, religion, and social customs and laws of their native subjects. A third group of Britishers and Europeans were also

eager to learn all about Indian religion language, and social observances. They were the British and European christian missionaries.

Bengali Hindus (the Bengali Muslims in the beginning held aloof from British contacts) were eager to learn the English language, and Western manners and customs in order to avail themselves of the opportunity for being the junior partners, or undergoes in both commerce, and administration of the new masters of the land.

It was, thus, a two way traffic. Necessity impelled the British to take the initiative in this interchange of knowledge, and ideas. The first British Governor-General of India, Warren Hastings founded the Calcutta Madrassah in 1781, and Jonathan Duncan established the Sanskrit College at Banaras in 1792. British administrative exigencies led to the establishment of these institutions. They were intended principally to interpret Mohammedan and Hindu law to English officers. The same reason led Sir William Jones, a judge of the Supreme Court, to select the celebrated Pundit Jagannath Tarkapanchanan of Tribani in district Hooghly for the job of compiling a Hindu law code in which the conflicting views of Hindu law-givers could be brought into a system. Lord Cornwallis accepted this recommendation of Jones. Tarkapanchanan compiled his famous Bibad—Vangharnav, which was later translated into English by the well-known Orientalist, Henry Herbert Colebrook.

Sir William Jones, with the assistance of local Orientalists, established in 1784 the Asiatic Society of Bengal for "enquiry into the history and antiquity, arts, sciences, and literatures of Asia. In 1788 the Society's journal Asiatic Researches came out. It may be mentioned in this connexion that the Bombay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, originally started as the Bombay Literary Society in 1804, also did very useful work in throwing light on India's rich heritage.

Administrative needs also accounted for the establishment

of the Fort William College in A. D. 1800. The starting of the East India College at Hailebury, England for training of British Civilians caused the decline in importance, and ultimate abolition of the Fort William College.

Individual Britishers were also making some remarkable contributions. Wilkinson, the famous translator of the Gita, with the assistance of Panchanan Karmakar cast Bengali types in wood in Hooghly. Brassy Halhead wrote a Bengali grammar in English. This book was printed in 1778 in Bengali wooden types made by Panchanan Karmakar in a press owned by an Englishman, named Andrews at Hooghly. James Augustus Hickie published on 19th January, 1780 the first English news journal of Calcutta, Bengal Gazette. Hickie was a free-lance, scurrilous journaiist, who directed his barbed shafts at the Establishment, not sparing even Lady Warren Hastings. None theless, he set on example of bold, fearless, even reckless journalism.

An important landmark in the awakening of Bengal was the establishment of the Baptist Mission by William Carey, Joshua Marshman, and William Ward in 1800 A. D. in the Danish settlement at Serampore, a few miles north of Calcutta. For thirty-eight years from A. D. 1800—1837 the Serampore Mission, besides translating the Bible into different Indian languages, and printing and distributing tracts and pamphlets for propagating christianity, did also a number of remarkable things for Bengal, and Bengalis. In 1800 A. D. Carey established his famous Serampore Bengali Press for printing Bengali books and journals. William Carey himself composed in 1801 a Bengali translation of the Bible, and a grammar of the Bengali language ; in 1812 he wrote Itihasmala. These and other old Bengali texts were printed by the Serampore press. The Serampore missionaries established a considerable number of English schools round about the Danish settlement and one of the finest and oldest colleges in Bengal, the Serampore College in 1818. In 1831 under this college were twenty one English

boys schools, and the number of students on their rolls was 1195. In 1818 was also started the famous Bengali weekly journal, *Samachar Darpan* under the editorship of John Clark Marshman, son of Joshua Marshman. Though Marshman was its editor, the writings in *Samachar Darpan* were done by Bengali Pundits.

Samachar Darpan had a long and very useful career. Astonishingly enough the Serampore missionaries also set up the first steam engine in India ; with its help they introduced the modern manufacture of paper on a large scale. It has to be admitted the Baptist missionaries working in the Danish settlement at Serampore did a lot to make the Bengali Hindus the vanguard of new India. Bengali prose literature, Bengali journalism, Bengali Press, and indigenous supply of paper in Bengal owe much to them, not to speak of their great service in the spread of English education among Bengalis.

The Scottish missionary, Alexander Duff also founded a few good english schools and colleges. A philanthropic scottish watch-dealer, David Hare toiled tirelessly and cmptied his purse in founding and financing sohools, and helping indigent Indian students of such schools.

British and European initiative is seen also in the field of girls' education in Bengal. A batch of European ladies started the female Juvenile Society in 1819 to found free schools for girls in Calcutta and its outskirts. The first free school was opened by them in Gouribari of the Ultadanga area called the Female Juvenile School. Miss Cook arrievied in India with the sole purpose of spreading education among Indian women. By 1824 she started twenty-four schools, but with few pupils. Finally, John Eliot Drinkwater Bethune, Law Member of the Governor-General's council founded with the help and support of the two Young Bengal leaders, Ram Gopal Ghosh, and Dakshina Ranjan Mukhopadhyay, and two eminent Pundits, Madan Mohan Tarkalankar, and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar the Hindu Balika Vidyalay on 7th May, 1849. The institution, which came to be

known later as Bethune School, and Bethune College, after the name of its founder, started with the only 21 students. Carriages were arranged for the conveyance of the girls.

We have been so far delineating the initiative and approach of Britishers and Europeans towards Bengalis, and their progress. What was the response of the Bengali Hindus to these overtures from the other side. Before going into that, we should note that the Bengali Hindus had developed, long before the advent of the British, a mind receptive to new ideas, ready to welcome changes in their habits and customs, and not afraid to leave the beaten track, and strike out into new avenues of thought and new paths of action. The religious and intellectual ferment in Nabadwip, on the river Hooghly, a little to the north of Calcutta in the fifteenth century had broadened and liberalised the mind and character of the Bengali Hindus. That Mini-Renaissance at Nabadwip prepared their mental makeup to react readily to new progressive ideas and ways. Sri Chaitanya through his preaching had considerably relaxed the traditional Indian rigidity on caste and sex. His teachings widely influenced the Bengali masses, and the lower strata of Hindu society, and liberalised their mind. Raghunath Shiromoni through his "Nabya Nayay" (New Principles of Thought) had given a new turn to the mental horizon of Bengal Hindus. In same Nabadwip Raghunandan Bhattacharya had compiled his "Nabya Smriti," and opened the door to social reforms for Bengalis. Jimutbahan's "Daybhag" (Law of inheritance), which was different from the law that governed the rest of India, gave individual liberty to the Daybhag-father in respect of ancestral property. He was free to follow his whims and wishes in managing, or disposing of the ancestral property. Compared to Vijnaneswar's "Mitakshara", which controlled the rest of India, it was a powerful assertion of the liberty of the individual.

We have seen what was the impact of English education and western ideas on Raja Ram Mohun Roy. But that was the

reaction of an individual of rare intellect and extraordinary personality.

How well the Bengali Hindus realised the importance and value of English education and how eagerly all sections of Hindu Bengal wanted their sons to have the benefit of it is exemplified in the story of the foundation of the Hindu College, a momentous event in the history of Bengal.

At a meeting held in the residence of Sir Edward Hyde East, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court on the 14th May, 1816 about fifty leading Hindus of Calcutta, including the principal Brshiman Pundits decided on establishing a college for imparting an English education and Western learning to their children. These moves and efforts finally culminated in the founding of the Hindu College on the 20th January, 1817.

Among those who took a leading role in founding and nurturing the institution were Maharaja Tej Chedra of Burdwan, Gopi Mohan Tagore, Gopi Mohan Deb of Sovabazar, Joy Krishne Sinha, Raja Sir Radhakanta Deb of Sovabazar, and Dewan Ram Kamal Sen.

At first the Hindu College received no aid from the Government. Indeed, Government attitude towards it was hostile. Raja Sir Radha kanta Deb nursed and nurtured the college with his care, labour, and finance. There were, ofcourse, other patrons also. In 1825-26 Horace Heyman Wilson, in collaboration with Ram Kamal Sen reorganised the college. To begin with the Hindu College was really a school.

Two things should be noted particularly in this connexion. Long before Macaulay's famous Minutes of 1835 even learned Brahmin Pundits had become eager to impart English education and Western learning to their sons. Secondly, the principal wellwisher of the institution was none other than the leader of the orthodox Hindu group, Raja Sir Radha Kenta Deb of Sovabazar.

In 1817 was established the Calcutta School Book Society, and next year the Calcutta school society. Not only the Hindn

college but quite a few English schools and colleges had been established in the Calcutta area through private enterprise and the efforts of Christian missionaries, before Government accepted Macaulay's recommendation.

The zest for acquiring English education and Western Knowledge was growing apace among Bengali Hindus, and was thereby transforming their mental outlook on religion and society. More important, this Western education was implanting in their mind a new and fast growing political and national consciousness.

Among such English schools was Raja Ram Mohun Roy's Anglo-Hindu school, Pataldanga High School, founded by the Calcutta School Society, Jaga Mohan Basu's Union Academy in Bhowanipur, and Gour Mohan Audy's Oriental Seminary, established in 1829. Bishops College was established in 1820 in Sibpore on the other side of the river. The Scottish missionary, Alexander Duff first started an English school which grew into the General Assemblies Institution in 1835. The Society of Jesus also started in Calcutta the St. Xaviers college about this time. In fact, Calcutta was fast becoming honeycombed with English schools and colleges.

But a controversy still reigned among the Indian leaders of thought, and among British administrators as to what should be the medium and curriculum of instruction for Indian boys.

The Anglicists urged that Indian boys should study Western literature, philosophy, history, and the Western sciences through the medium of the English tongue. The orientalists wanted that Indian boys should learn the traditional Indian subjects through the medium of Sanskrit, or any other Indian language.

The question was finally settled by the famous minute of February 2, 1835 of Thomas Babington Macaulay, the first Law Member of the Governor Generals' Council. Governor-General Bentinck accepted the recommendation of Macaulay, and declared his policy on education on the 7th march, 1835. It laid down that henceforward the British Government will spend

money only on the spread of Western knowledge and science through schools and colleges. The medium of instruction will, of course, be English. Old native schools will, however, continue to receive, their grants. But Government money will be devoted principally to teaching English literature and Western science to the natives of India through the medium of the English language.

Macaulay in his characteristic strong and dogmatic style emphasized his viewpoint on the matter with a remark which was universally resented to by Indians. Said he :

“A single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India”, and Calcutta was soon going to have one. Sir Charles Metcalfe on the 15th September, 1835 removed the restrictions on the freedom of the Indian press. The citizens of Calcutta expressed their gratitude to Metcalfe by erecting to his memory Metcalfe Hall. In 1836 was established the Calcutta Public Library which came to be housed in Metcalfe Hall. In Bombay a library had been established earlier than 1836, but in importance and circulation of its books it could stand no comparison to the Calcutta Public Library. The Public Library in the Town of Midnapur Bengal, now known as Rishi Rajnarain Pathagar was established in 1852.

Following the announcement of Government's policy on Education by Lord William Bentinck there was a spate of new English Schools and colleges all over Bengal. In 1835 the Medical college in Calcutta was founded ; in 1836 the Hooghly College. through the philanthropy of Haji Mohammed Mahsin, and the Dacca college in 1841.

Another important landmark in the spread of English Education and western learning in India was Wood's Education Despatch of 1854. Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control in England sent, in 1854, a comprehensive Despatch, which laid down the principles of a graded educational system.

A department of Public Instruction was to be set up in each of the three Presidencies, and also in the North western Provinne (Uttar Pradesh), and the Punjab. A network of graded schools was to be spread all over British India. Provision was to be made for sanction of grants-in-aid to some of these schools. A system of scholarships for meritorious students should be introduced, and girls education should be encouraged. Universities were to be established in Calcutta Bombay, and Madras on the model of the University of London, which was then a purely examining body. The universities of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras were established in 1857.

Human progress, paradoxically enough, results from fusion of different cultures, and also out of friction between different civilisations. Calcutta witnessed in the nineteenth century a beautiful commingling and communion between India and the West, and also ugly clashes caused by differing Western and Indian values and viewpoints.

Many Englishmen and Europeans were fascinated by the ancient lore and annals of India, by the teachings of the Gita and the Upanishads, and by the charms of the rich sanskrit literature. Mention has been made of Wilkinson, Sir William Jones, Colebrook, and Horace Hayman Wilson. There was a host of others, like Gladwin, Winfred, Hutton, and Prinsep.

On the other hand, thousands of Bengalis and other Indians were enthralled by the beauties of the English literature, were enlivened by the appeal to rationalism and humanism in Western thought, were inspired by the glory and grandeur of liberty, democracy, and nationalism mirrored in Western history.

But there was also a different, and not so pleasant a picture. Christian missionaries scathingly attacking Hindu tenets and practices. Hindu reformists like Ram Mohun took up the gauntlet and attempted to parry attacks of the christian

missionaries. Ramkrishna Paramhansa revived and popularised the Hindu faith and his disciple, Vivekanand threw a strident challenge on behalf of the ancient philosophy and religion of India.

Young Bengal, drunk with the new Western spirit, in the first flush of youthful exuberance poured contempt on every Hindu custom and concept. Naturally the orthodox section was up in arms against them.

Next came the controversy between Anglicists and Orientalists over the medium and nature of education.

Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar's movement in favour of remarriage of widows shook Hindu society to its foundations, and raised a terrible storm. The orthodox section led by Raja Sir Radha Kanta Deb organised a stiff resistance to the reform.

Even the question of imparting education to girls raised an ugly dust storm. While some of the best and noblest spirits of Bengal laboured strenuously to spread education among women, some of the orthodox Hindus treated the matter with uncouth ribaldry, and coarse taunts and jibes and confidently predicted that education would turn girls into widows and harlots.

Bengali Hindus much earlier and in very much larger number got the benefit of English and Western education than dwellers in other parts of India and this helped them to be the Vanguard of New India. But it cannot also be denied that the magnificent manner in which the sons of Bengal utilised this windfall, and their own splendid endeavours and achievements deservedly won for them this pre-eminence.

An extraordinarily large number of men with extraordinary character, calibre, and passion for patriotic service adorned the land. In the galaxy of her great and noble sons, and in their many-splendoured achievements nineteenth century Calcutta could well vie with Periclean Athens or Florence of the

Renaissance. We have referred briefly in a previous chapter to the giants among them and their work; to the stupendous Raj Ram Mohun Ray—the Moses of Modern India; to that amazing prodigy of a poet, journalist and teacher Henry Louis Vivian De Rozio, who himself barely out of his teens inspired the flower of the youth of Bengal with an unflinching zeal for reason, liberty, truth and public service; to the venerable Brahmo patriarch, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore-sage, sedate, and serene, quietly but steadily labouring for the uplift of his people, to the incomparable Pundit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar in whom blazed forth the noblest virtues of man—a Taj Mahal built of noble humanity, to the charismatic Brahmanand Keshub Chandra Sen; to the cyclonic Monk of volcanic eloquence, Swami Vivekanand. Great and illustrious names who really made Bengal the Vanguard of New India.

But there were many other remarkable figures, who made noteworthy contributions to the greatness of Bengal. It is not possible to enumerate here the work of all of them. But it would be unfair not to mention the services of some of them, at least.

First, mention must be made of Young Bengal, or the brilliant group of Derozians and their valuable contribution to the Renaissance in Bengal. Inspite of a bit of youthful excesses in the beginning, they developed into serious, responsible public leaders, who laboured incessantly for the spread of education and enlightenment, for removal of ignorance and superstition, for rousing social and political consciousness among their countrymen. The agencies through which they worked were journals and associations. But they always remained steadfastly loyal to the ideals of their great master-Derozio-truth, reason, and freedom.

We may mention here the names of some of the prominent Derozians. They were Rev Krishna Mohan Banerjee, Ram Gopal Ghosh, Rasik Krishna Mallick, Dakshina Ranjan

Mukhopadhyay, Pyari Chand Mitra, Ramtanu Lahiry, Radhanath Sikdar, Tara Chand Chakravarti, Digambar Mitra, Madhab Chandra Mallick, Shib Chandra Deb, Har Chandra Ghosh, and Govind Chandra Basak.

Rev krishna Mohan Banerjee was the most distinguished member of the group. Although he embraced Christianity, he was a celebrated orientalist, and a profound sanskrit Scholar. The University of Calcutta, in recognition of his contributions to oriental research conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Law, honoris causa. He strove to serve his people in every sphere, educational social and political.. In 1881 he brought out the weekly Enquirer, in which he exposed the superstition, and irrational customs and practices of old Hindu society. Krishna Mohan won the respect of even Iswar chandra Vidyasagar.

He and his friend Rasik Krishna Mallick lost their job as teachers of the Pataldanga School for the same reason which cost their mentor's job in the Hindu College.

For the propagation of rational and progressive views among the people three important disciples of Derozio-Rasik Krishna Mallick, Dakshina Ranjan Mukhopadhyay, and Madhab Chandra Mallick started a bi-lingual weekly ealled "Janeswar" (Pursuit of knowledge) on the 31st May, 1831 in Bengali only, and from 1st January, 1833 in both Bengali and English. We have seen both Ram Gopal Ghosh, and Dakshina Ranjan Mukhopadhyay assisted Bethune in the founding of the Hindu Balika Vidyalay. Derozio's disciples themselves established schools for imparting English education to children in their own homes. Rev Krishna Mohan Banerjee in 1831 in his weekly Enquirer mentions half-a dozen such schools in and around Calcutta. Young Bengal, or the Derozians started societies or associations journals, and schools for the progress and enlightenment of their people. They also did much to rouse the political consciousness of the people. Ram Gopal

Ghosh was in many ways an outstanding member of Young Bengal. Ram Gopal Ghosh, Tara Chand Chakravarti, Pyari Chand Mitra, Ramtanu Lahiry, Krishna Mohan Banerjee, and a few others, all brilliant DeRozians, formed in 1838 a distinguished educational and cultural association under the name of the Society for the Acquisition of General knowledge. In course of time this Society began to take interest in administrative affairs.

In 1842 Ram Gopal Ghosh brought out a bi-lingual monthly called the Bengal Spectator in which besides cultural, scientific, and literary subjects, political problems also used to be discussed.

Ram Gopal Ghosh in a book with the title of Black Acts supported Drinkwater Bethune's proposal to bring Britishers living in the mofussil under the jurisdiction of local courts, and also scathingly criticised the conduct of some British indigo planters and others in the countryside. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee wrote :

“Besides Raja Ram Mohun, Ram Gopal Ghosh, and Harish Chandra Mukhopadhyay were our pioneer patriotic leaders.”

Another versatile DeRozian was Rasik Krishna Mallick. A summary of the address delivered by him in the Calcutta Town Hall on the 5th January, 1835 criticising some of the provisions of the Charter of 1833 is given below. Said Rasik Krishna Mallick :

This Charter has not been enacted for the benefit of Indians, but only to serve the interests of the share-holders of the East India Company, and of the British people. It was wholly unjust to charge the revenues of India for payment of debts incurred by the Company through the stupidity and incompetence of their officers. Why should Indian revenues be spent for the payment of a Bishop and two Archdeacons, whose appointment was considered necessary for the religious welfare of British civilian and military personnel ? Why

should the Governor-General have discretion to grant financial aid to Christian missionaries, and for the construction of their churches with a view to spread christianity among the natives ? Did it not amount to this that Indians will have to pay for the propagation of a faith they consider harmful to their spiritual salvation ?

The Charter had conferred the right of everyone to Government service without distinction of race, colour, and creed. But how can Indians get into the higher services under present arrangements. The authorities should devise such a system of recruitment as will make possible for Indians to compete for the higher services.

The restrictions on trading by Britishers have been removed by the Charter, but the restrictions imposed on trading by Indians still remain in force.

Lastly, while Bishops have been appointed for moral education of British civilian and military community, no provision is there in the Charter for the spread of education among the natives.

What a cogent, courageous and vigorous denunciation of an Act of the British Parliament uttered in the Calcutta Town Hall full fifty years before the foundation of the Indian National Congress.

Mention has also to be made of some of the close friends and associates of the great Pundit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. There was the erudite and respected Pundit Madan Mohan Tarkalankar, who showed his bold and progressive outlook by volunteering first to send his two daughters-Bhubanmala and Kundamala—to the Hindu Balika vidyalay founded by Drinkwater Bethune. He was socially ostracised for this. A close kindred spirit of Vidyasagar was Akshoy Kumar Dutt. He was for some time in charge of the Tattwabodhini Sabha, and Tattwabodhihi patrika of Maharsi Devendranath Tagore. While presiding over the meetings of the Tattwabodhini Sava

he would determine the powers, duties, and functions of God by majority of votes, after obtaining the views and vote of each member present. Akhoy kumar Dutt was a strong rationalist and humanist and a believer in scientific knowledge and outlook. Akshoy kumar Dutt himself, like his great friend vidyasagar, was an atheist.

The rich and young admirer and friend of Vidyasagar, Kali Prasanna Sinha was a remarkable figure of the age. Of his literary achievements we will have to speak later. But he spent a lot of money in employing a batch of eminent Sanskrit scholars with whose help he got the Mahabharat translated into Bengali. He distributed copies of this Bengali Mahabharat free to deserving people. He founded the Vidyotsahini Sabha-Society for the Encouragement of Learning and lavishly patronised it. He built a theatre for dramatic performances in his palatial residence. This example was followed by several other plutocrats of the city. When Rev. Long was fined rupees one thousand by the court for writing an Introduction to the English translation of Dinabandhu Mitra's Nil-Darpan, Kali prasanna Sinha promptly deposited the sum on behalf of Rev. Long.

Another young follower and admirer of Vidyasagar was Pundit Shiv Nath Shastri ; who later became the leading spirit of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. Shiv Nath Shastri's contributions to the awakening of Bengal both in the social and political spheres were not inconsiderable. He was the real initiator and inspirer of the great Bipin Chandra Pal. Shiv Nath even formed a secret political group.

But so far as rousing patriotic and national sentiments among the people is concerned, Naba Gopal Mitra, Rajnarain Bose, and others associated with the organizing of the Hindu Mela made for greater contribution Bipin Chandra Pal once said : 'We learnt what nationalism is from Naba Gopal Mitra, and patriotism from Surendra nath Banerjee. It may

even be said that Bengali Hindu nationalism sprouted out of the Hindu Mela.

Mela is popular Bengali word for assemblages of people, which were usually held on the occasion of religious festivals, or on some auspicious and significant day of the year. Melas had been held in India from time immemorial on the Chaitra Sankranti, or the last day of the year. Naba Gopal Mitra and his associates renamed the Chaitra Sankranti Mela as Hindu Mela, and organized it in a manner intended to arouse national and patriotic feelings among the people. Though Naba Gopal was the soul of the Hindu Mela, the doyen among the group of organizers was the old Brahmo leader and teacher, Rishi Rajnarain Bose. Rajnarain was a passionate patriot, and ceaselessly and tirelessly toiled for the upliftment of the race in every sphere of national life, and even tinkered with the idea of forming a secret revolutionary group to fight the British. Poet Rabindranath refers to this attempt in a comic vein. Rajnarain Bose's famous speech on "Hindu Dharmer Srestathwa" Superior Excellence of the Hindu Faith appeared in book form on September 15, 1872. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee hailed this book of Rajnarain as it breathed nationalism and patriotism. No wonder his two grandsons (his eldest daughters' sons) Aurobinda Ghosh and Barindra kumar Ghosh became such celebrated revolutionaries. Krishna kumar Mitra, editor and proprietor of the famous Bengali weekly Sanjivani, who was among the nine persons deported from Bengal by the Government in December 1908 was another son-in-law of Rishi Rajnarain Bose.

Naba Gopal Mitra got the idea of organizing the Hindu Mela from Rajnarain Bose's Prospectus of a society for the promotion of National feeling among the natives of Bengal. To run the Mela Naba Gopal formed his National Association. Naba Gopal Mitra was enamoured of the word 'National'. The paper which he started with the help and financial

assistance of Devendranath Tagore he named National paper. He started a National Gymnasium. The Society he organized was National Society ; the school he founded he named National School. Hindu Mela to him in English was National Gathering. Inspired by national sentiments a group of Bengali young men—the celebrated dramatist and actor, Girish Chandra Ghosh the distinguished actor dramatist Amrit Lal Bose and the star actor, Ardhendu Sekhar Mustafi and others opened a theatre in 1872. At Naba Gopal Mitra's insistence it was named the National Theatre. People, therefore, started calling him National Naba Gopal, or National Mitter.

Naba Gopal Mitra with financial assistance from Dwijendranath Tagore and Ganenderanath Tagore—son and nephew respectively of Maharshi Devenranath started the Hindu Mela on Chaitra Sankranti in 1867.

In his opening address to the second session of the Mela in 1868, the Secretary, Ganendranath Tagore declared the objectives of the Mela as follows :

The first objective of the Mela is to unite at the end of the year the Hindu community. This coming together is for us very significant. We have assembled here not for usual religious practices, nor for any material pleasures, nor for diversions or amusements, but for the sake of our motherland, for the sake of India.

The second objective of the Mela is to inculcate self-reliance among Indians for our own progress.

Although National Naba Gopal was the soul of the Hindu Mela, almost all prominent public figures in Bengal were associated with the organization of the Mela. The Mela embraced all activities relating to the reform and improvement of every sector of the national life.

Stirring national songs and poems were composed, sung, or recited in the Mela. The second session of the Mela, held in 1868, was inaugurated with a celebrated song composed

by Satyendranath Tagore, the first Indian member of the Indian civil service and second son of Maharshi Devendranath.

The opening lines of this song were :

“Mile sab Bharat santan

Ek tan manopran

gao Bharaten yasogan.”

Unite all ye children of Bharat,

In one voice, mind, and heart

And sing the glory of Bharat.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee broke forth into rapturous rhapsody o'er this song.

Another famous poem composed for the Hindu Mela was from the pen of Monomohan Bose, poet, playwright, journalist, and a pillar of the Hindu Mela. This was a well known verse beginning with the words :

“Diner din sabe Deen,

Bharat holo paradhin”

Day by day all are getting impoverished.

Because Bharat is under foreign yoke.

The poem deplored in poignant language the pitiful plight of those engaged in indigenous crafts and industries.

Papers on literature, science, and education written by distinguished scholars used to be read and discussed in the Mela. Physical gymnastics were shown. Exhibitions of paintings and of handicrafts, including women's work used to be held. Prizes were distributed for excellence in all such work.

The Hindu Mela continued to be held annually till, at least, 1875. The Mela, undoubtedly, was a powerful positive catalyst in rousing the sentiments of nationalism and patriotism among the Hindus of Bengal.

Bengali language and literature made remarkably rapid strides after the discovery of Western literature by the

educated sons of Bengal. And the breath and bloom of Bengali language and literature is the bone and marrow of Bengali Hindu nationalism. In our reference to Bengali language and literature we will also include literary societies, and literary journals. We have already mentioned a few of these societies and journals. This is not the place, however to trace the history of Bengali language and literature. We will only touch upon aspects of Bengali literature which show new trends and tendencies, with particular reference to their patriotic and nationalist overtones and inspiration.

First, we shall deal with poets and dramatists. Almost all of them were fervidly patriotic and nationalist.

Notwithstanding all his crudities, oddities, and absurdities, none can deny the honour of a pioneer to Iswar Gupta (1812-1869) poet and journalist. Elsewhere we have spoken of his extreme form of nationalism. He was more of a versifier than a poet. But his easy free-lance verse helped modern Bengali poetry to break off the old traditional shackles. It was, however, as the founder and editor of the first Bengali daily *Sanvad Pravakar* that Iswar Gupta rendered the greatest service to his people. After passing through the stages of being a weekly, a fortnightly, and a monthly, the *Sanvad Pravakar* was first published as a daily on the 14th June 1839- the first daily in any Indian language.

The poet Rangalal Bandopadhyay (1827-1887) wrote his 'Padmini Upakhyan' to rouse the patriotic fervour of his people. The piece in it which begins with the line "Swadhinata Hinatay Ke Banchite Chay re" who would care to live on bereft of freedom is well-known and oft-quoted.

The real revolution in Bengali Drama and poetry was effected by one who was an astonishing genius and tragic character. Madhusudan Dutt (1824-1873) became a convert to Christianity while still a student, and got the name of Michael Madhusudan Dutt. He married first an English

lady, and next a French lady. He adopted totally the Western style of living. He had once said : "we should speak in English, think in English, and dream in English." Naturally, therefore, he started his literary career by writing two poems in the English language. Suddenly he turned his eyes to "the tongue of his fathers," and started to write in his mother tongue. He read through the masterpieces of Western poetry in different European languages. He, therefore, came tremendously equipped to instil into the dead bones of Bengali drama and poetry the pulsation of Western modes and spirit. In the brief span of seven years he poured forth dramas both tragic and comic modelled on Western masters ; introduced the blank verse into the Bengali language, and wrote a powerful epic in blank verse ; he wrote sonnets in Bengali modelled on those of Petrarcha and Shakespeare. He stamped indelibly the impress of the West on Bengali literature. He is undoubtedly the path-finder of modern Bengali poetry and drama. Michael Madhusudan Dutt is the Raja Ram Mohan of Bengal's literary sphere. His sonnet on 'Bharat Bhumi' (India) breathed patriotic sentiments.

The poet Hem Chandra Bandopadhyay (1838-1903), like his contemporary Rangalal wrote his "Brito Sanhar Kavya" with the intention of rousing national sentiments in the hearts of his countrymen. His poem "Bharat Sangeet" (song of India) was really an inspiring patriotic poem.

Nabin Chandra Sen (1847-1909), another major poet of modern Bengal invoked national and patriotic sentiments in his poem on the battle of Plassey.

Among important dramatists of Bengal we have already referred to Dinabandhu Mitra (1830-1873) and his Nil-darpan, and to the political ferment created by that drama. We have also mentioned the poet and dramatist, Monomohan Bose (1831-1912). Girish Chandra Ghosh (1844-1911) perhaps, the greatest among Bengali dramatists wrote a few historical dramas

to ignite the fires of patriotism and nationalism in Bengali hearts. But the person who may be described as the poet of patriotism was Dwijendralal Roy (1863-1913) who through a series of historical dramas and stirring poems directed his remarkable talents towards imprinting in the breast of his countrymen a passionate love for the motherland.

Among less known poets and dramatists Akshoy Chandra Chaudhuri, who wrote "Bharatgatha" a collection of patriotic poems ; Dwijendranath Tagore, Jyotirndranath Tagore, Upendranath Das, and specially Govinda Chandra Das (1854-1918) of Bhowal deserve mention.

Bengali language and literature reached crowning consummation in the writings of Rabindranath Tagore, who after winning the Nobel Prize in literature in 1913, was universally acclaimed as one of the greatest of world poets. Rabindranath is vast like the ocean, and we better not enclose him within the narrow compass of this volume. We will have to refer to his patriotic utterances and acts from time to time.

The first specimens of modern Bengali prose are found in some of the writings of Pundit Mritunjoy Vidyalankar of Fort William College Raja Ram Mohun wrote his religious treatises in prose, and even composed a Bengali grammar. But he dealt with difficult religious and philosophical controversies, and his style was stilted, and lacked clarity, grace and flow. Pundit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar first brought beauty and charm to Bengali prose. Vidyasagar, Madan Mohan Taskalankar, and Akshoy Kumar Dutt rendered incalculable service to their community by compiling a wonderful series of Bengali primers for beginners and school children.

The Tattwabodhini Patrika founded by Maharshi Devendranath Tagore in 1843 was the most important Bengali journal prior to the publication of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's famous Bangadarshan in 1872. Vidyasagar was entrusted

with the editorship of the *Tattwabodhini* by the Maharshi. Akshoy kumar Dutta (1820-1886) was its editor for twelve years, and he wrote extensively on various scientific subjects, dealing with them in a scientific and rational spirit. Jyotirindranath Tagore wrote that the articles of Akshoy kumar Dutt in the *Tattwabodhini Patrika* on the glories of ancient India first kindled patriotic sentiments in the heart of the people.

But among Bengali writers in prose the man whose pen before the advent of Bankim Chandra spread the fire of patriotism and nationalism among Bengalis was Rishi Rajnarain Bose (1826-1899). Of him we have spoken in connexion with the Hindu Mela.

So far as popular literature is concerned, a brilliant Derozian Pyari Chand Mitrs writing under the name of Tek Chand Thakur achieved a double triumph by writing "Alaler Ghare Dulal", as that book is considered the first Bengali novel, as also the first work written in the popular Bengali dialect. The charismatic Kali Prasanna Sinha wrote in Calcutta cockney his unique and incomparable "Hutom Panchar Naksha" a collection of vitriolic satires on the social vices of his contemporaries.

The Pontifex Maximus of Bengali Hindu nationalism was Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay (1838-1894)-the great Bengali novelist and literator Bankim was also a great thinker. Bengali prose reached full maturity in Bankim's writings, and he still remains unrivalled as a Bengali novelist. But Bankim Chandra Chatterjees' significance and importance in the national struggle of India equals his eminence as a man of letters. It is with this latter aspect of Bankim Chandra that we are more concerned in these pages.

The broad sweep of Bankim's mighty intellect could not have failed to notice the need for an Indian nationalism uniting all creeds, races, and provinces of the vast sub-

continent. Indeed, in the very first issue of his celebrated *Bangadarshan* in 1872 he wrote India cannot advance unless the different Indian races come together in a unity of opinion counsel and effort. On the occasion of Sambhu Mukherjee's bringing out an English journal Bankim wrote to him.

"There is no hope for India until the Bengali and the Punjabi understand and influence each other and can bring their joint influence to bear upon her. This can only be done through the medium of English, and I gladly welcome your projected journal."

But an Indian nationalism was yet an indistinct nebulous phenomenon in the distant horizon. Bankim's birth and upbringing, the milieu of his life, and his inner being were Bengali and Hindu. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee became the most powerful prophet of Hindu nationalism. He spoke of "Ai, subarnamoyee Banga Pratinipa" Oh ye golden image of Bengal". Bankim's nationalism and patriotism sprung from deeply rooted spiritual and emotional sources. In the last two decades of his life he plunged into all the major problems that confronted his countrymen. In doing so he emerged as a political seer and evangel.

Two novels published in 1884 *Anandamath*, and *Devichaudhurani*, and his unique fantasies called *Kamalakanter Daftar*, and a few essays like "Samya", in which he deplored the hiatus between rich and poor, and "Anushilan Tattwa" and *Bangler Krishak* contain Bankim's political gospel. In an essay entitled "Our Politics" Bankim, through the parable of a dog and bull, ridiculed the policy of mendicancy followed by the national leaders, and counselled adoption of a policy based on courage and self-determination.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Rishi Rajnarain Bose were the first great Bengalis who were definitely and strongly against slavery under foreigners, True, Raja Ram Mohun had once said about the plight of his countrymen :

‘They are condemned to perpetual oppression and degradation from which they have no hope of being raised during the existence of the British power.’

But Ram Mohun’s political attitude to the ruling race was ambiguous. He was essentially an admirer and supporter of British rule over India. Bankim Chandra, one of the first two graduates of the Calcutta University, entered the provincial service of the British Government, and continued therein till superannuation. He was also made a Rai Bahadur. He had often to speak his mind through past events and parables, and under the camouflage of religious terminology, or through the lips of a fictitious opium-eater, into Aanadamath was inserted the historic Vande Mataram song, which later became the National Anthem of India, and whose two opening words, “Vande Mataram” became the battle-cry of all nationalist fighters. In Debichaudhurani he went to the brink of suggesting an armed struggle against the Britsh. Bankim passionately desired that his countrymen should bestir themselves to throw off the foreign yoke. It may not be mere chance coincidence that Barrister P.Mitter, who belonged to Naihati, in close proximity to Bankim’s ancestral home at Kanthalpara, and who often met and discussed matters with Bankim, founded the first secret revolutionary society in Bengal, and named it Anushilan Samity from Bankim Chandra’s essay Anushilan Tattwa. Sri Aurobinda Ghosh and his famous group of revolutionaries drew their inspiration from Bankim.

It was Bengal’s exceptionally rare good luck that it came to have such a priceless asset as the Tagore family of Jorasanko, Calcutta. What are the Medici of Florence compared to the Tagores of Jorasanko ? The family tree of the Jorasanko Tagores was a gloriously radiant column which illuminated every avenue of thought and activity of the Bengal Hindus-religious, cultural, intellectual and political. Prince Dwarka Nath Tagore’s mansion at Jorasanko was a virtual

high standard University for the cultivation of creative arts and letters, and for the pursuit of progressive cultural, social, and political thoughts and experiments. Prince Dwarkanath Tagore, as a close friend and collaborator of Raja Ram Mohun Roy, was associated with latter's public activities. His son, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore was a serene and lofty teacher of religion and morals, who strove steadily for the betterment of the community. Then came the brilliant galaxy of his sons and nephews. Abanindranath Tagore was the father of modern Indian art, and Gaganendranath Tagore experimented with modern trends in European art. Dinendranath Tagore was the musical maestro. Dwijendranath and Jyotirindranath were versatile literati. Satyendranath was the first Indian to become a member of the Indian Civil service. He also wrote a famous national song. Jyotirindranath, Surendranath, and Rabindranath participated in political activities and movements, as did Saraladevi Chaudhurani a grand daughter of the Maharshi. Even ladies of the family distinguished themselves as literators and journalists. Maharshi Devendranath's daughter Swarnakumari Devi, and her daughter Saraladevi Chaudhurani ran a well known Bengali monthly Bharati. Jyotirindranath Tagore, and Satyendranath's daughter Indira Devi were accomplished students of French literature and philosophy. There were many high intellectual summits in the Range of the Tagores, but the Mt. Everest was the great Rabindranath, their pinnacle of pride and glory. The Bengali Hindus, and even Muslims of Bengal owe a debt of immeasurable value to the Tagores of Jorasanko.

If the Tagores of Jorasanko were the spearheads of creative arts and letters of Bengal, the cause of science found a zealous champion in a distinguished physician of Calcutta. Thanks principally to the untiring efforts of Dr. Mahendra Lal Sarkar the Indian Association for the cultivation of Science came into being on the 29th July, 1876,

In 1894 was established the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad through the munificence of a few Zemindars, who were also ardent patrons of literature. Bengal was, thus, provided with an Academy of Arts and Letters.

We would like to close this chapter with the story of the resplendent triumph of women's edution in Bengal. Following the christian missionaries, the Brahmo Samaj and Brahmo leaders came forward to spread education among the women of Bengal. They also formed new girls schools, like the Hindu Girls School in Ballygunge, and the Banga Mahila vidyalay, established in 1876 by Dwarkanath Ganguly, an ardent champion of this cause. Brahmos of Bengal were the progressive elite of those days, and no wonder girls from Brahmo families flocked to these schools and showed their proficiency in studies. A list of the girls of the Banga Mahila Vidyalay who were deemed fit to sit for the Entrance Examination will testify to this fact. Of these girls, some who acquired prominence in later life, may be mentioned.

Swarnaprava Basu, (sister of Acharya Jagadish Chandra Basu and wife of Anand Mahon Bose), Binodini, (sister of Barrister Monmohan Ghose) Sarala Das, (daughter of Durgamohan Das) Kadambini Bose (who later became wife of Dwark Nath Ganguly) Abala Das (daughter of Durga Mohan Das, and wife of Acharya Jagadish Chandra Basu)

Kadambini Basu, appearing as student from the Bethune School, passed the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University, in 1878. She was the daughter of Brojo Krishore Basu, a Brahmo of Bhagalpur. Two years earlier, in 1876, Chandramukhi, a student of Dehra Dun School for Native Christian Girls had passed an examination which was considered equivalent to the Entrance. She was the daughter of Bhuban Mohan Bose, an Indian christian of Dehra Dun. Both these girls wanted to go up for higher education. Bethune School had to be upgraded to a College to afford scope

for Kadambini's higher studies. Kadambini continued to be the sole student of Bethune College. Not being a Hindu, Chandramukhi could not get into the Bethune College. She enrolled herself as a student of Free Church of Scotland College.

Both Kadambini and Chandramukhi passed the First Arts in 1880, and went for the B.A. course. In January, 1883 Kadambini Bose, and Chandramukhi Bose became the first two lady graduates in the British Empire.

PARTITION OF BENGAL AND SWADESHI MOVEMENT

The Viceroyalty of Curzon was a water-shed in the history of British India. When he assumed office in December, 1898 the people of India, barring a handful of hostile Marathi Chitpavan Brahmins, still regarded British rule over India as a blessing, and agreed with Raja Ram Mohun that it was Providential. Curzon, who regarded himself as a Zealous protagonist and guardian angel of the British Indian Empire, sought feverishly to add to its strength and security by delivering a series of blows against institutions and communities marked out by him as constituting a potential menace to that Empire. But through the remorseless operation of the law that says every action produces an equal and opposite reaction, Curzon, when he resigned his office in August, 1905 had succeeded splendidly in implanting in Indian hearts strong and durable feelings of animosity towards that Empire, and in engendering in them a spirit of resistance and defiance to it. Bengal for a time was virtually in revolt against British rule.

Fussy, showy, bumptious, drumming about his own efficiency George Nathaniel Curzon, first Baron and Marquess of Kedelston was, nevertheless, intellectually gifted and alert and vigorous in action. Surendra Nath Banerjee used to refer to him in common parlance as the Muddlehead of Kedelston. But Curzon, and his successor to the Viceroyalty, Earl Minto were the Machiavellis of imperialism, and it cannot be denied the Machiavellian manipulations of these two did leave an impress on the subsequent history of India.

But before we discuss the sinister moves of Curzon to safeguard the British Empire in India, and his *Divide et Impera* policies let us have the grace of giving the devil his

due. He realised fully the value and importance of ancient Indian historical monuments, and his Act for preservation of such monuments deserves to be gratefully remembered by the Indian people.

Curzon spotted and pin-pointed the factors that posed a threat to the Indian Empire of Britain. Firstly, the Bengali intelligentsia, really the educated Bengali upper caste Hindus ; they had, through English education, thoroughly assimilated Western political ideas and ideals. They had succeeded in welding themselves together into a strong, united, and politically conscious nation. The Muslims of Bengal, though forming the majority of the population, were toeing the line chalked out by the Hindu leaders. This was because the Muslims were lagging far behind the Hindus in acquiring Western education and modern political ideas. Secondly, Calcutta had become the nerve-centre of the national and political life of India. and was giving the lead to the rest of the sub-continent in political aspirations and activities. To Curzon Calcutta was the danger spot, the nest in which the future wreckers of the Indian empire were bring nestled and nurtured. The Corporation of Calcutta was becoming a forum and training-ground for Bengali leaders, and also giving them some public importance and influence. That nest had also to be singed. The Indian National Congress must be given a quietus. The mischief done by the measures of his wrong-headed predecessor, Lord Ripon-the Local Self-Government Act, and repeal of Lord Lytton's Press Act had to be undone.

Curzon determined what should be the antidotes to these ominous symptoms he had diagnosed in the imperial organism, and then proceeded to apply his remedies with remarkable energy and vigour. The spread of higher education of a Western type among Bengalis should be severely restricted and regulated by the Government. This Western education,

he rightly diagnosed, had sown the seeds of intransigence among the natives. The national unity and solidarity of the Bengali race must be broken up both geographically and communally. The Muslims of Bengal must first be detached from the apronstrings of Hindu leaders, and then turned hostile to the Hindus.

The importance of Calcutta is to be reduced by the creation of a rival political and administrative centre at Dacca, and by bringing the civic administration completely under Government control. As to the Indian National Congress, Curzon with unconcealed glee predicted :

“My own belief is that Congress is tottering to its fall, and one of my ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise.”

Curzon fired his first salvo against the Corporation of Calcutta. Curzon wrote to Brodrick, Secretary of State for India :

“Calcutta is the centre from which the Congress party is manipulated throughout the whole of Bengal, and indeed the whole of India. Its best wire-pullers and most frothy orators reside here. (Tara Chand—History of Freedom Movement vol 3).

By the Calcutta Municipal Act of 1899 (Mackenzie Act) the municipal body was brought completely under the grip of the Government—its former democratic features being slashed. Whereas formerly the number of elected municipal commissioners was fifty out of a total of seventy five, the Act of 1899 reduced the number of elected commissioners to twenty five out of a total of fifty. Besides, the entire executive power was vested in the Chairman, who was to be a high British official. As a mark of protest against the retrograde measure twenty-eight of the elected commissioners of Calcutta resigned in a body. The Indian underdog has started barking back at his British masters ; soon he would bite too.

Curzon believed in the imperial recipe of impressing on the natives of India the might and majesty of the British Empire through grandiose pomp and pageantry. He wasted an enormous amount by holding in Delhi in 1902 an extravagant Durbar costing £ 180,000 in connexion with the coronation of Edward VII.

In 1901 Lord Curzon held in camera an Educational conference in Simla to which only European educationists were invited. The Educational conference was followed by the appointment of a Universities Commission in 1902. The personnel of this Commission, as originally announced, did not include a single Hindu. Due to vigorous protests against this Commission in the nationalist press Mr. Justice Gurudas Banerjee was included in this Commission. Their report was a deadly blow to the system of higher education in India. It recommended :

- (1) The abolition of the second-grade Colleges, which formed the bulk of the colleges in the country ;
- (2) The abolition of the law classes ;
- (3) The fixing of a minimum rate of college fees by the syndicate, which really meant the raising of the fees.

It should be mentioned here that justice Gurudas Banerjee gave his strong note of dissent to all the above recommendations. Nevertheless, they were embodied, with minor amendments, in the Indian Universities Act, 1904, by which Curzon intended to bring Universities, and even private colleges under government control and vigilance, and also to retard the growth of higher and scientific education among the natives of India. This was a volte face on the views and attitude of much-maligned Macaulay.

Curzon, the arch-imperialist was naturally acutely conscious of the white Man's Burden of civilising the Indian niggers. While he himself often indulged in recourse to untruth when it suited his purpose, this supercilious British pro-consul

could not resist the temptation of haranguing the natives on the superiority of the ethics of the West over the baser morality of the East. In his convocation address in the Calcutta University delivered on the 11th February, 1905 he told the graduates :

"I hope I am not making any false or arrogant claim when I say that the highest ideal of truth is to a large extent a Western conception." Then he proceeded to analyse how the Indian idea of truth was inferior and doubtful. This Curzonian charlatanism sparked off a tremendous fury of protest from the nationalist press. Sister Nivedita gave a crushing rejoinder in an unsigned letter to the Statesman in which she quoted from Curzon's own book—Problems of the Far East (1894) instances in which he himself had deliberately prevaricated.

By his Calcutta Municipal Act of 1899 Curzon had mitigated the mischief done by his erring predecessor, Ripon's local self-government Act. He also wanted to repair the damage done by another wrong step of Ripon—repeal of Lord Lytton's Press Act of 1878. Curzon enacted the Indian Official Secrets (Amendment) Act of 1904 aimed at protecting oppressive British officials from public criticism.

Finally, Curzon delivered his sledge-hammer blow against the fomentors and ringleaders of the disaffection towards British Raj in India the Bengali people. Curzon would hit the Bengali Babus with a multi—pronged missile.

He would split up the Bengali people geographically as well as communally. Instead of one Bengal there would be in future two Bengals an East Bengal and a (West) Bengal, Coincidentally there would be a Muslim-dominated Bengal (East Bengal) and a Hindu-dominated Bengal (Bengal, or West Bengal). Curzon did not care at all for the latter, but he was very much interested in the former.

This partition of Bengal, Curzon shrewdly assessed, would

also be a blow struck against the Indian National Congress. He had already noted against the Congress the following remark :

“This organisation is controlled by a set of wire pullers. Their constant effort has been to induce the leading Mohammedans to submit to their influence.”

“Curzon was, above all, apprehensive of the danger involved in allowing the consolidation of the people of any region. In reply to a suggestion of Ibbetson that Berar may go to Bombay he wrote :

“I cannot contemplate any proposal which would add to the strength and solidarity of the Maratha Community with anything but dismay. The Marathas of Bombay (Deccan) are the most able and the most dangerous of the opponents of our rule in India. Why then should we go and gratuitously make a present to Poona of this enormous accretion of political strength, multiplying the forces of our enemies, consolidating the Maratha race” (Tarachand-Ibid vol-3).

Curzon’s scheme for partitioning Bengal was a three pronged missile. It would simultaneously effect a vivisection of the Bengali nation, break up the political concentration in Calcutta, and set up the Muslims of East Bengal as a separate and rival entity against Hindu Bengal.

In December, 1903 the first scheme for partitioning Bengal was announced. It declared that the entire Chittagong division and the districts of Dacca and Mymensingh would be separated from Bengal and annexed to Assam. The specious plea under which Curzon, the Machiavelli of imperialism camouflaged his sinister and satanic design was administrative convenience and considerations. He said the proposed partition aimed at improvement of an over sized and under administered province.

There was a tremendous popular uproar against the proposal. The nationalist press denounced it vehemently.

Government made a feint of consulting the public leaders of East Bengal, and Curzon went on a tour of East Bengal ostensibly to rally support in favour of his scheme. The viceroy failed totally in his East Bengal mission, and even the Nawab of Dacca was, at first, strongly against it. But when "Curzon declared at a public meeting at Dacca that in partitioning Bengal he wanted to create a province with a Muslim majority where Muslim interests and Muslim demands will get priority, Nawab Salimullah of Dacca, who had bitterly opposed Curzon's previous proposal for partition of Bengal, was won over through this speech." (Rajendra Prasad-Divided India) Incidentally, Sir Bamfylde Fuller, Lieut-Governor of the newly created province of East Bengal and Assam declared in a speech that he had two wives, Hindu and Muhammadan, but that the Muhammadan was the favourite wife.

While public opposition was temporarily lulled by these deceitful dodges of the Government, Curzon and his officials were really busy over revising and expanding the scheme of partition.

"The revised scheme was conceived in secret, discussed in secret, and settled in secret, without the slightest hint to the public." (S. N. Benerjee—A Nation in Making),

Suddenly, on July 20, 1905 the announcement was made that Bengal was to be partitioned, and that the whole of Chittagong division, the districts of Dacca and Mymensingh as well as the whole of North Bengal, together with Assam will form the new province of East Bengal and Assam. The announcement fell like a bomb-shell on the astonished people of Bengal.

But the leaders of Bengal soon assembled in conference to chalk out the programme for resisting this diabolic British ukase, and very soon the entire nationalist press and the whole country was ablaze with indignation and fury.

The first step taken was to convene a great meeting of protest at the Town Hall of Calcutta on the 7th August, 1905, to which District towns were invited to send delegates. Quoted below is a fine but brief description of the historic Town Hall meeting from Tarachand's History of the Freedom Movement Vol-3 :

"A vast multitude gathered, most of the shops in the city were closed, five thousand students marched to the Hall.

The crowd was so large that two overflow meetings had to be arranged outside. The excitement was intense, slogans and shouts of Vande Mataram rent the air, pennons bearing the phrase "No Partition", and flags inscribed with mottos, "United Bengal", and "Unity is strength" waved over the heads of the assembled crowd. Hand-bills and pamphlets were distributed, and black bands as token of mourning. Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandy of Kssimbazar. Bhupendranath Bose, and Ambika Charan Mazumdar presided over the three separate meetings."

Among others, the historic resolution on the boycott of British goods was adopted by this epoch-making mammoth public meeting held in the Town Hall of Calcutta on the Memorable 7th August, 1905. This meeting and this resolution symbolised the unfurling of the flag of revolt against British domination in India.

The resolution ran ;

"That this meeting fully sympathises with the resolution adopted at many meetings held in the mofussil to abstain from the purchase of British manufactures so long as the partition resolution is not withdrawn, as a protest against the indifference of the British public in regard to Indian affairs and the consequent disregard of Indian public opinion by the present Government."

This resolution urging boycoot of British goods opened a new chapter in the history of India's Fight for Freedom.

Britishers and British rule over India would no longer be confronted by the natives with pen and tongue merely, and hard words break no bones, as the saying goes, but with an effective economic weapon.

With boycott of British good came as an inevitable complement swadeshi, or use of home made articles. The twin movements of boycott of foreign manufactures, and use, in their stead, of articles of indigenous manufacture swept Bengal like a mighty tornado.

The movement was mostly confined to the urban centres ; but in the city of Calcutta, and all the towns of Bengal meetings were continually held, impassioned speeches were delivered, stirring songs written by patriotic poets were sung, solemn vows were taken urging abstention from use of foreign things, and use of India made goods instead. The student community jumped enmasse into the fray, and with zealous and feverish activity spread among the people the double, message of Boycott and Swadeshi. They burnt foreign cloth, asked their mothers and sisters to break to pieces their foreign glass bangles ; they picketed shops that sold foreign goods ; students themselves opened swadeshi stores in which they sold home-made articles. The people of Bengal seemed to be in a state of political frenzy over the partition of their homaland.

Surendranath Banerjee led the anti partition agitation and came to be called by the people "the uncrowned king of Bengal," and 'Surrender Not,' because of his brave declaration "I will unscuttle the settled fact" (partition of Bengal). He records in his autobiography a significant aspect of the Swadeshi movement. Writes he : "the Swadeshi movement invaded our homes, and captured the heart of our women-folk who were even more enthusiastic than men."

Remarks Tarachand (Ibid) :

"The swadeshi movement found supporters in all classes

of society, from princely landlords and merchants to humble workers like washermen and barbers, even the Sanyasis." One may add from the great poet Rabindranath to the street beggar of Calcutta all types and categories of Bengalis joined it with infinite enthusiasm. It was the passionate resistance of an entire people against a particularly sinister and satanic ukase of the British Government. It was a defensive battle which the Bengalis fought against a foreign aggression. The din and clash of the battle which rolled on through six long years was loud and deafening, and true to Surendranath Banerjee's brave words, it shook the foundation of the British Empire in India.

"From December, 1903 to October, 1905 over 2,000 public meetings attended by 500 to 50,000 people were held in the two parts of Bengal at which Hindus and Mohammedans with equal zeal and earnestness joined in the protest". (A. C. Mazumdar-Indian National Evolution).

The ideas of Boycott of British goods, and Swad Shi did not originate with the anti-partition agitation. Apart from Chinas boycott of U.S. goods, the two complementary movements had appeared in India itself earlier. But the anti-partition agitation gave a tremendous boost to the twin movements not only in Bengal but throughout India.

"The ideas of Swadeshi and boycott, born of the popular feelings in 1905, were not new. The Americans, the Irish, had the Chinese had adopted them before. Swadeshi as a purely economic measure for the development of Industry, has been preached by Gopalrao Deshmukh, G. V. Joshi, and M. G. Ranade of Maharashtra, and Rajnarain Bose, Naba Gopal Mitra, and the Tagore family of Bengal. Similarly Bhola Natd Chandra had recommended boycott in the 1870s to bring economic pressure on the British public. Tilak had led a full-fledged boycott campaign in 1896." (Amalesh Tripathy-Freedom Struggle).

In the midst of this terrible political turmoil in Bengal the man who had raised the storm departed from the scene. Curzon clashed with Kitchener, the Commander-in-chief regarding control over the Indian army. The authorites in Britain supported Kitchener's contention, and Curzon, his vanity wounded, resigned the Viceroyalty on August 12, 1905. His successor to that office, Earl Minto was as much a dyed-in-the wool imperialist as Curzon, and even more Machiavellian than Curzon. Earl Minto's cryptic comment on the question was that the partition of Bengal was a settled fact.

The Government had notified that the partition of Bengal was to take effect on the 16th October, 1905. But on the 10th of October Carlyle, Chief Secretary of Bengal issued a Circular to all District Magistrates which threatened schools with dire consequences if they failed to prevent their pupils from participation in agitation in general, and the boycott activity in particular.

Government aid to such schools would be stopped ; teachers and members of school committees would be enrolled as special constables ; the schools would be disaffiliated by the University, and their students debarred from getting Government scholarships.

The second red letter day in the annals of the anti-partition agitation was the 16th October, 1905, on which the partition was to come into force. The leaders drew up an elaborate programme for the day. The best account of the days proceedings is given at first hand by Surendranath Banerjee who himself was the hero of the hour.

"The day was declared a day of national mourning. First, there was to be the Rakhi-bandhan ceremony the red band of brotherly union was to be tied round the wrist of all whom we welcomed as brothers. Secondly, the day was to be observed as a day of fasting and purification. The domestic hearth was not to be lit ; food was not to be cooked except

for the sick and the invalid ; the shops to be closed ; business was to be suspended ; people were to walk barefooted, and bathe in the Ganges in the early morning hours. Thirdly, the foundation-stone of a proposed Federation Hall was to be laid. The Federation Hall was to be the meeting ground of the old province and its severed parts, the mark and symbol of their indivisible union. Finally, there was to be a meeting for the purpose of raising a National Fund to help chiefly the weaving industry."

"With the breaking of the dawn the whole city of Calcutta seemed to re-echo to the shouts of Bande Mataram as thousands of people streamed through the different through-fares to the bank of the river for a holy dip. They carried with them rakhis, which they tied round the wrist of passers-by. The bathing ghats were crammed with a surging mass of men and women, all furnished with quantities of rakhis, which they tie round the wrist of friends and acquaintances and even of strangers."

The scene next shifted, in the afternoon, to the great popular rally in the square opposite the University Science college on upper circular Road. The proceedings opened there with a forceful speech by Justice Gurudas Banerjee. The foundation stone of the Federation Hall was laid by the doyen of Bengals' national leaders-Ananda Mohan Bose, who was carried to the meeting place from his sick bed. Ananda Mohan's speech on the occasion was a magnificent example of fervid and noble eloquence worthy of an illustrious patriot and saintly man.

"Just before the foundation stone was laid, Sir Ashutosh Chowdhury read the following proclamation in English and Dr Rabindranath Tagore followed him with a translation in Bengalee :

Whereas the Government has thought fit to effectuate the Partition of Bengal inspite of the universal protest of the

Bengalee nation, we hereby pledge and proclaim that we as a people shall do everything in our power to counteract the evil effects of the dismemberment of our province, and to maintain the integrity of our race. So God help us.-A. M. Bose."

"The crowd then proceeded to the spacious compound of the residence of Pashupatinath Bose in Baghbazar, a National Fund of Rs. 70,000 was collected within a few hours". S. N. Banerjee adds : "The amount was made up of small subscriptions. It was the gift of the great middle class of Bengal." (A. Nation in Making).

Repression, more repression, and repression without end is the only specific antidote of a foreign imperialist Government against the uprising of a subject people. On the very day he assumed the office of Lieut-Governor of the newly created province of East Bengal and Assam Sir Bamfylde Fuller issued his first circular, or administrative directive. He asked the District Magistrates to furnish names of the local ring leaders of the agitation. On the 8th November, 1908 he issued two circulars. One threatened school authorities with dire consequences, and students with disqualification for Government service, if they participated in politics. The other banned the shouting of Bande Mataram in streets and public places, and even bringing out "Sankirtan" parties, or devotional processions, An order declared the use of compulsion for buying only country made goods an offence. To cow down with a brutal hand the town of Barisal, where under the leadership of Aswini kumar Dutt the boycott and Swadeshi movements had grown formidable, a company of Gurkha military police was stationed there on the 15th of November, 1905. Later, Gurkhas were deployed in other districts also. 326 boys from Rangpur, Dacca, Noakhali, and other high schools were fined and expelled for attending Swadeshi meetings. The pupils of Madaripur School who had a scuffle with an European employee were ordered to be

flogged. Similar harsh orders were passed in the districts of Mymensingh, Dacca, and Howrah. Kingsford, the English Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta ordered the flogging of Sushil Sen, a boy of fourteen. Brahmabandhb Upadhyay in his fire-breathing journal-Sandhya-dubbed kingsford as "Kassai-Hakim," or Butcher Judge.

A vile and vicious government repressive measure was the imposition of Punitive tax, or collective fine on the inhabitants of a locality where the Swadeshi movement appeared to be markedly strong. It was a subtle and satanic chastisement to cow down the entire population of a particular area.

In the nationalist camp, on the other hand, new dimensions were being added to the anti-partition agitation. The expulsion of students from government aided schools and colleges for antipartition activities posed a practical problem. Alternative educational institutions had to be provided for such students. Hence, to boycott and swadeshi a third item, National Education was incorporated in the programme of the movement. On November 16, 1905 the National council of Education was constituted with the object, "to impart, and promote imparting of Education-Literary and Scientific as well as technical and professional...on national lines.....attaching special importance to a knowledge of the country, its Literature history, and Philosophy, and designed to incorporate with the best assimiable ideals of the West and to inspire students with a genuine love for, and a real desire to serve the country."

A Provisional Committee entrusted to draw up a scheme for the purpose submitted its report on December 2, 1905, which was accepted by the National council of Education on March 11, 1906. The Council was registered in June, 1906 under Act XXI of 1860. The Bengal National college was inaugurated on Agust 14, 1906. Sri Aurobinda Ghosh,

who had finally left Baroda and come to stay in Calcutta towards the end of 1905, was named the Principal of the College on a monthly remuneration of rupees one hundred only.

To combat the spate of Government circulars directed against the students an anti-circular society was formed with Sachindra Prasad Bose as Secretary, and Krishna Kuar Mitra of the Sanjivani as President. They formed a band of enthusiastic and devoted young National Volunteers who rendered yeoman service to the Swadeshi cause.

The next highlight of the anti partition movement was the forcible dispersal by the police under orders of the District Magistrate of the Bengal Provincial conference at Barisal in April, 1906.

The Conference started on April 14, 1906. On that day when the delegates were proceeding in a procession to the conference an act of Police barbarity was perpetrated. The leaders, who were at the head of the procession were allowed to go unmolested. "It was when the younger delegates, the members of the anti-Circular society emerged from the 'havelli' (compound of a local Raja's house) into the public street that the whole programme of the police was developed, and the attack was begun. They were attacked with regulation lathis' (fairly thick sticks six feet long); the Bande Mataram badges that they wore were torn off. Some of them were badly hurt, and one of them, Chittaranjan Guha, son of Babu Monoranjan Guha, a well known Swadeshi worker and speaker, who afterwards was deported, was thrown into a tank full of water, in which, if he had not been rescued, he would probably have found a watery grave." (S. N. Banerjee-A Nation in Making)

When Surendranath Banerjee remonstrated with Kemp, Superintendent of Police, Barisal against the assault on the delegates he was promptly arrested and taken to the residence

of the District Magistrate, Emerson. Emerson summarily fined Banerjee rupees two hundred on the count of contempt of court ; he had to pay another sum of rupees two hundred for being a member of a procession taken out without license. The fines were paid up. Later, on an appeal filed by Surendranath Banerjee the sentence of fine was quashed.

Those were the incidents of the first day of the conference. As the delegates started discussions in the conference on the second day, Kemp, District Superintendent of Police entered the pandal. He told the President of the conference, A Rasool, Bar-at-Law that the conference must disperse unless he was prepared to give a guarantee that the delegates would not shout Bande Mataram in the streets after the conference was over. The President declined to give the guarantee. Kemp then read out the order of the District Magistrate directing the dispersal of the conference under section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code. After expressing some initial indignation over the arbitrary order the delegates filed out of the pandal. Only one, Krishna Kumar Mitra of the Sanjivani would not budge from his seat. Surendranath himself testifies "it was with the utmost difficulty that we persuaded him at last to leave the pandal."

The Barisal conference made Surendranath Banerjee the uncrowned king of Bengal for the nonce. He reached the pinnacle of popularity and hero-worship. But the backwash of this wave of popularity soon set in, and he and his associates like Bhupendranath Bose, Moti Lal Ghosh and others receded from the limelight. The way the Police had broken up the conference and the tame way the leaders had obeyed an arbitrary order of the British authorities demonstrated the utter weakness and helplessness of these leaders. On the other hand the clamour of the people against the alien Government was rising in crescendo. Far braver and forceful leaders, new journals, far more fierce and

menacing in their vitriolics against Feringhi (foreigners), and Feringhi Raj (foreign rule) than Surendranath's Bengalee, or Moti Lal Ghosh's Amrita Bazar Patrike appeared on the scene.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that Surendranath Banerjee had rendered invaluable basic service to the cause of Indian independence. Through his paper, Bengalee, and his sonorous eloquence he had roused the political consciousness of Bengalis, particularly of students and the younger generation, and also to some extent, of others parts of India. Through his political tours and speeches all over the sub-continent he had become some sort of a National leader of the Indian people. The first such leader, to be followed closely by Bal Gangadhar Tilak. His own people conferred on Surendranath posthumously the honorific of "Rastrapati"-the political Maestro of India.

Indeed, the popular uprising in Bengal was fast developing from its initial phase into its second phase. The anti-partition agitation had by now grown into an anti British rule campaign in full blast. The right of the Britishers to rule over India was being vigorously assailed. It was a full-throated challenge. Positively, the right of the Indian people to establish their independent rule, after ousting the Britishers from the Land, was being asserted without the least inhibition. We will see that in the third and final phase of the movement a small but determined section of educated Bengali youths started attacking Britishers with bombs and bullets. The cry of the second phase of the anti-partition agitation was clearly concisely and emphatically stated on the 10th November, 1906 by the New India with which was associated Bipin Chandra Pal.

"Absolute National Autonomy is the national goal, and the nation must attain it or perish in the national attempt."
(K. C. Ghosh-Roll of Honour).

So a fourth objective was added to the political movement in Bengal-Swaraj, or self-rule by the Indian people. The movement now rested on four pillars-Boycott, Swadeshi, National Education, and most important of all swaraj. The great Marathi Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak voiced the latest demand in words that electrified the whole of India—“Swaraj is my birthright and I will have it.” To Tilak boycott, Swadeshi, and National Education were the steps intended to lead up to Swaraj.

The new top leaders of Bengal in the second phase were Sri Aurobinda Ghosh, Brahmabandhab Upadhy, Bipin Chandra Pal, and Raja Subodh Mallik. The outstanding new journals spreading the new tempo of the movement and reflecting the new temper of the people were the English Bande Mataram, founded by Raja Subodh Mallik to which both Aurobinda Ghosh and Bipin Chandra Pal contributed, and the English New India of Bipin Chandra Pal, the two Bengali journals were the ever memorable daily Sandhya of Brahmabandhab, and the weekly Jugantar started by a group of young revolutionaries working under Sri Aurobinda.

Tarachand (History of Freedom Movement—Vol. 3) draws a portrait of Sri Aurobinda in glowing words—

“He was the most brilliant among the galaxy of talented men who challenged the government and directed the people’s agitation.

Aurobinda Ghosh was a genius of a rare order. His intellect both in span and depth covered an immensity of range. He was a master of many languages. English was almost his mother tongue and he had a wonderful command over its vocabulary and diction. He was well versed in Latin, and he won a scholarship for university studies in Greek.

He had a good knowledge of French, and was acquainted with German and Italian. On return to India he learnt

Bengali and Sanskrit both of which he came to know thoroughly."

Aurobinda studied in St. Paul's School, London, and then in Cambridge. He competed in the Indian Civil Service examination, but failed in the riding test. In 1893 he returned to India, and entered into the service of the Gaekwad of Baroda. Later he became the lecturer of English in the Baroda College. Towards the end of 1905 he left Baroda finally, came over to Calcutta and hurled himself headlong into the anti-partition agitation both as a journalist and leader. He became also the head of the most active group among the revolutionaries of Bengal. Of him we will have to speak a lot later.

Brahmabandhab Upadhyay's life can be likened only to a blazing meteor burning itself out in a dazzling dash across the horizon. Born Bhabani Charan Bandopadhyay in the Village of Khanyan in the district of Hooghly in 1861, he became an ardent Christian missionary with the name of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay and the attire of a Hindu Sanyasi. As he was not observing the usual norms of a Christian missionary he was ex-communicated by the Church. Whenever a high and noble ideal fascinated him Brahmabandhab would plunge after it with all his soul and fierce energy. Then, after some time his soul would be stirred deeply by the irresistible call of some other high mission and he would run after it with his characteristic fanatical zeal. But in all his life "he nothing common did or mean." After the death of Swami Vivekanand, he felt an urge to spread the message of Vedanta among Westerners, went to Oxford University and delivered a series of lectures there on Vedantism. Returning to India he became a collaborator of Gurudev Rabindranath in founding the Brahmacharya Ashram School in Santiniketan, the seed out of which sprouted the famous Viswavarati of Rabindranath.

Then he heard the battle drums of the anti-partition and Swadeshi struggle and rushed into the thick of the fray with dauntless and heedless abandon. Through the columns of the *Sandhya*, which appeared towards the close of 1904, Upadhyay poured liquid fire into the veins of young Bengal, to use the words of Rabindranath. Though he used the language of the common people in his celebrated journal vitriol seemed to gush from his pen in denouncing Britishers and British rule. Brahmapandhab seemed the very personification of his people's hatred and defiance to 'Feringhis' and "Feringhi Raj." He had no political group behind him—no political workers, no followers. He once wrote in the *Sandhya* the moving line. "I have no wife, no children, no home." In the political arena also he stood solitary, alone, heroic and magnificent. Brahmapandhab seemed to trumpet into the ears of his countrymen the famous message of Danton, the great leader of the French revolution. Leaudace, Encore-Leaudace, Tujour Leaudace—to defy, again to defy, and defy without end to urge them on in their fight against the foreign government.

Spiritualism has often been the last resort of fatigued and frustrated revolutionaries. Brahmapandhab's spiritualism, like that of Sister Nivedita, burst forth finally into revolutionary blaze.

Bipin Chandra Pal was born in November, 1858 in village Paila in the district of Sylhet in Assam in a middle class family. While a student in the Presidency college, Calcutta he came in contact with Shivnath Shastri, leader of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, and joined that Samaj. Like Brahmapandhab (then Bhabani Charan Bandopadhyay) Bipin Chandra pal was initiated into patriotism by Surendra Nath, Banerjee through his lectures on Mazzini. But during the second phase of the anti-partition movement Bipin Chandra far outstripped his political mentor in the vehemence

of his onslaughts on the alien rulers of the land. Bipin Chandra Pal was an erudite scholar and an original thinker. But his forte was his wonderful eloquence both in the English and Bengali languages.

He had fire on his tongue and in his pen, and his speeches and writings inflamed the hearts of his audience with patriotic ardour and courage in the grim struggle against the British authorities. For a time he was the idol of the students and the youth of Bengal. The trio-Lajpat Rai of the Punjab, Balgangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra and Bipin Chandra Pal used to be lionised by extremists, and popularly referred to as Lal-Bal-Pal. Bipin Chandra Pal also accompanied Barrister P. Mitter to Dacca when the latter went there to open a branch of the Anushilan Society, a secret revolutionary organization. The fiery oratory of Bipin Chandra Pal caused a political conflagration in distant Madras. Bipin Chandra also advocated passive resistance to arbitrary British laws and orders.

Subodh Chandra Mallik was an affluent, generous, and philanthropic citizen of Calcutta. But he was also a brave and staunch patriot, and with unflagging zeal, and unflinching courage he continued to be one of the top leaders of Bengal through all the three phases of the anti-partition agitation. He founded the famous paper Banda Mataram. When he donated rupees one lakh towards the setting up of the Bengal National College the people of Calcutta, assembled at a meeting, conferred on him the title of Raja. Subodh Mallik thus became a unique Raja, receiving his title not from any Mughal emperor, nor from the British government, but from his admiring countrymen. He fully deserved such honour, he was a king among men. Raja Subodh Mallik was one of the nine prominent leaders of Bengal who were deported by the Government in December, 1908.

The Bengali weekly Jugantar, twin brother to the Sandhya

in its fierce hostility to Britishers and British rule, came out in March, 1906.

Barindra Kumar Ghosh, younger brother of Sri Aurobinda Ghosh, Bhupendra Kumar Dutt, youngest brother of Swami Vivekanand, and Abinash Chandra Bhattacharya all young members of the secret revolutionary society headed by Sri Aurobinda started the journal with the assent and approval of their leader, who himself contributed a few articles to the earliest issues of the paper. Kali Prasanna Kavyavisarad and his Benali paper Hitavadi, though milder in its tone and temper than Sandhya, or Jugantar, rendered valuable services in strengthening the Swadeshi movement.

K. C. Ghosh in his wonderful and unique compilation- Roll of Honour gives copious extracts and translations from the fiery journals of the time. We may profitably quote from that book a few of these by way of illustration.

Jugantar wrote on November 6, 1906 :

The stage has been reached when "we shall not be able to part with our ideal of freedom, and we shall stake our lives" for the cause. The Sandhya came out on May 10, 1907 with this.

But mere words will not avail. Without the lathi and the bomb the "ferenghi" (foreigner) will not be brought to his senses.

In another issue the Sandhya asked :

How long will you tolerate oppression lying down ? And why ? Will you learn to give blows for blows ?

On July 30, 1907 the Jugantar said :

The day people will suspect that this house of cards cannot withstand a single puff of the entire Indian people, that day will see the beginning of the end of British rule.

Bande Mataram on August 1, 1907 prophesied :

The despot's frown never marred the destiny of a nation.

The Austrians frowned, but Italy is free ; the Britishers frowned but the American colonists are free ; the Spaniards frowned but Cuba is free. The seeming weakness of a subject people always turned into invincible strength through the inspiring ideal of freedom. Even if these persecutions bring about a temporary demoralisation we must not lose heart. Now losing, now winning we shall proceed to our goal.

On the very next day Jugantar came out with this :

If it be the united desire and will of a whole nation to shake off the foreign yoke and to gain independence, in the eyes of God and justice whose claim is more lawful, the Britishers or the Indians ? Certainly the Indians. After the Barisal incident even the milder Hitavadi warned "that arms will at last be used against arms, and the white man's blood will atone for the blood drawn from inoffensive boys."

The celebrated journals of the city of Calcutta have been mentioned above. But the contribution to the success of the anti-partition agitation of some papers published in the districts like Charu Mihir of Mymensingh, Hitaishi of Khulna, Dacca Prakash of Dacca and Medini-Bandhab of Midnapur was not inconsiderable. Political Pamphlets, which could afford to be more free and fiery than newspapers were scattered plentifully throughout Bengal. They helped to arouse popular enthusiasm. One such entitled "Amader Raja Ke" (who is our king) questioned the right of the British to rule India. It said, it is our blood the Britishers are sucking ; it is our money on which they are fattening ; why should we submit to these unjust rulers ?

Another, Sonar Bangla (Golden Bengal) called on the people of Bengal to stand united and tear into pieces the nest of the foreign crows and throw it into the Ganges.

Thus, we find that the anti-partition agitation had developed into a strong anti-British-imperialism movement ;

the cry of independence had been irrevocably raised, and the resolve had been taken to oust British rule from India.

But we should remember that if constitutional methods and agitation can never liberate an enslaved country from alien domination, nor can fiery speeches and articles in the press, as the Sandhya had, indeed, pointed out in its writing of May 10, 1907. If that were possible the stentorian eloquence of Surendra Nath Banerjee, the fiery oratory of Bipin Chandra Pal, the resonant writings of Bande Mataram, and the volcanic lava poured forth by Sandhya and Jugantar could have melted away the British power in India ten times over. "The puff of the entire people" of which Jugantar had spoken in its issue of July 30, 1907 will not be witnessed till the advent of Mahatma Gandhi as the national leader of India in 1920. Neither constitutional agitation, nor mere words, however fiery and blood-warming, can bring freedom to a subject people. Verbonnade, however thunderous, shall never vanquish their oppressors. They shall have to purchase their liberty by paying the price for it with their blood, sweat and tears. A few brave souls did come forward to pay that price, and stand forth as beacon lights to others. Their story will be told later.

The Government launched a series of prosecution under the law of sedition against editors of newspapers particularly galling to it.

Bhupendranath Dutt, the young editor of Jugantar was prosecuted for two articles—"Bhai Bhanga" (Awaya with fear), and "Lathousadhi" (The stick-medicine)-printed in that paper. On July 22, 1907 the editor made the following statement before the court :

"I, Bhupendranath Dutt beg to state that I am the editor of the journal, Jugantar, and I am responsible for all the articles in question. I have done what I have considered in good faith to be my duty by my country. I do not wish to

make any further statement or to take any other action in the trial. Bhupendranath Dutt was sentenced to one years rigorous imprisonment on July 24, 1907.

Next, Aurobinda Ghosh and Raja Subodh Mallik were prosecuted in connexion with seditious writings in *Bande Mataram*. At that time it was not mandatory to publish the name of the editor of a journal. Aurobinda's name did not appear as editor, so how could he be convicted as editor of *Bande Mataram*? Bipin Chandra Pal was the first editor of *Bande Mataram*. The government prosecution summoned Bipin Chandra Pal as a witness to depose as to whom he made over his charge as editor of *Bande Mataram* when he left. Bipin Chandra Pal firmly refused to depose. and was sentenced to six months simple imprisonment on a charge of contempt of court. But Aurobinda Ghosh and Raja Subodh Mallik had to be acquitted.

On September 3, 1907 the forty-six year old lion-hearted and indomitable editor of *Sandhya*, Brahmabandhab Upadhyay was arrested for certain seditious articles appearing in that paper. He was taken to the thana and released on bail. Brahmabandhab went to attend court in a bridal procession, thus, making British Laws and Judiciary appear as objects of ridicule and contempt in the public eye. Before the court, while taking full responsibility for the paper and the impugned articles Upadhyay made the deathless utterance :

"I do not want to take any part in this trial because I do not believe that in carrying out my humble share of the God-appointed mission of Swaraj, I am in any way accountable to the alien people who happen to rule over us and whose interest is and must necessarily be in the way of our true national development."

Here in a nut-shell we find the spirit and gospel of the rebellion in Bengal of 1905. While on bail Upadhyay was operated upon surgically in the Campbell Hospital, where he

expired on the morning of October 27, 1907, Almost the last words he had said were :

"I will not go to the jail of the Feringhi to work as a prisoner."

The human volcano lay cold and dead. Upadhyay Brahmabandhab walked through life, his gaze ever fixed on luminous stars far above all earthly things. Brahmabandhab remains the grandest Bengali figure of the anti-partition and Swadeshi days. Other principal luminaries of the age, later on, either wilted, retraced their steps, recanted their political principles and preachings, retreated from the field of struggle, or drifted away from it. For Brahmabandhab death barred the way to all chances of future denigration. Upadhyay Brahmabandhab knew when to die, even if he did not will his own death, as some fondly believed.

By now a more intrepid band of political fighters appeared vowed to give the last full measure of patriotic devotion to their country and countrymen.

The sound of bombs and bullets hurled against Britishers was heard in Bengal. But that story will be told separately in a subsequent chapter. Bengal had revolted against British rule.

Muslims in large numbers participated in the antipartition and Swadeshi movements. Some women also stepped out of their seclusion and joined in processions and picketing. The most energetic and indefatigable among muslim leaders was Liakat Hossain of Patna. Among other prominent Muslim leaders were Abdul Rasool Bar-at-Law of Barisal, and Abdul Halim Ghaznavi, a zemindar and lawyer of East Bengal.

The British rulers, on their part, were doing their nefarious best in combating this surge of defiance among their native subjects. Large sections of Muslims in East Bengal were mobilised by the Government to counter the agitation of Bengali Hindus.

The Government itself set up a battery of repressive laws to muzzle the movement. The Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act (1907) provided for more stringent measure to prevent public meetings likely to promote sedition on to cause disturbance to public tranquillity. The Newspapers (incitements to offences) Act of 1908 provided for prevention of incitements to murder and to other offences in newspapers. The Explosive substances Act. 1908 prohibited the manufacture, storing of, or carrying of explosives. The Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908 was enacted for more speedy trial of certain offences, and for the prohibition of associations dangerous to the public peace. The Indian Press Act of 1910 provided for more stringent control over the press.

In December, 1908 Government made a clean sweep of almost all the leaders of the agitation in Bengal.

The following nine leaders were deported from Bengal under Regulation 111 of 1818 Aswini Kumar Dutt, 2 Krishna Kumar Mitra, (3) Raja Subodh Mallik, (4) Shyamsundar Chakravarti, (5) Pulin Das, (6) Bhupesh Nag, (7) Satis Chatterjee, (8) Monoranjan Guha Thakurta, and (9) Ashu Das Gupta. The only important leaders who were spared by the government were Surendra Nath Banerjee, and Ambika Charan Mazumdar of Faridpur. Sri Aurobinda Ghosh was then an undertrial prisoner in the Alipore Jail, and Bipin Chandra Pal had sailed away to England.

It has to be noted here, however regrettably, that Mrs Annie Besant, who like Bipin Chandra Pal, was often erratic in her political views and utterances, congratulated the viceroy on his extraordinary courage in taking this laudable step—the deportation of the nine Bengal leaders.

After this the tempo of the movement began to sag. But freedom's battle, though ever lost, is ever won. On the 12th of December, 1911 at the Coronation Durbar held in Delhi the British monarch, George V announced the terms of modi-

fication of the partition of Bengal : (1) The Bengali-speaking divisions were to be re-united under a Governor-in-Council ; (2) Bihar, Orissa, and Chotanagpur were to be constituted into a new province under a Lient-Governor-in-Council ; (3) Chief Commissionership of Assam was to be restored ; (4) Delhi was to be the future capital of India. Bengali-speaking areas regained their unity, but Calcutta lost her primacy on the map of India—glorious and resplendent Calcutta. The splendid city, as the years roll by, will slide down slowly to the sad plight of a dying Metropolis, Stricken with apparently incurable ailments. Alas for the city of Job Charnok—once the Queen among cities of All Asia, Proud urb Prima Indis !

Kudos to the valiant people of Bengal and their worthy leaders. Gandhiji wrote, the Swadeshi movement removed from the minds of men the terror of the British, taught people to embrace suffering ; nothing counts more than this in a nations awakening.

In his book, A case for India the cminent American historian, Will Durant rightly remarked that the revolution in India commenced from 1905.

Whatever the differences between them in political emphasis and methods the leaders of Bengal collectively and jointly had done a splendid job. They richly descrve the eloquent tribute paid to them by Tarachand (Freedom Movement-vol-3).

“There were in Calcutta and in the districts during these stormy days many men of exalted integrity and moral virtue, of high intellectual calibre. of excellent organinizing ability, men of great courage steadfastness eloquence, men of passionate and fervent devotion to the Motherland.”

GIFTS OF MOVEMENTS TO INDIA

The tremendous struggle waged by the strongly welded and well-consolidated Bengali Hindu nationalism against a particularly sinister thrust of British imperialism designed to dismember their motherland and vivisect their race was like an earthquake which caused political tremors throughout the subcontinent. The antipartition and Swadeshi movements of Bengal contributed to India and Indians four politically valuable and important gifts.

- (1) It caused a political shake-up among people living beyond the borders of Bengal.
- (2) It encouraged small-scale and cottage industries, and helped in the growth of big industries throughout India.
- (3) It gave to India a National Flag.
- (4) and it gave to the Indian people their National Anthem.

In Western India Lokmanya Tilak, and his fiery associates, like Mahadev Paranjpe, the famous editor of Kal-pioneers in political extremism-took up the cause of Bengal with zest and ardour. Tilak's Kesari and Paranjpe's Kal gave the call to Indians to take up the programme of Swadeshi and boycott of British goods as political weapons for winning Swaraj. They organised meetings all over the Bombay Presidency to popularise Swadeshi and enforce boycott. Lokmanya Tilak led a great bonfire of foreign cloth at Poona. He opened co-operative stores as the head of the Swadeshi Wastu Pracharini Sabha. He exhorted the Bombay Mill owners to supply dhotis at moderate rates. An instance of close collaboration between Tilak-led Marathi extremists and Aurobindo-led Bengali extremists was the celebration of Sivaji festival in Calcutta in the summer of 1906. Tilak accompanied by Khaparde and Moonje came to Calcutta on invitation on this occasion.

The next strongest response to the Bengal movement came from the Punjab. The leaders there were Lajpat Rai and the group of Arya Samajists, and Sardar Ajit Singh.

The most important organ of the movement there was Lajpat Rai's *Punjabee*. There was strong agitation in the Punjab against the use of foreign sugar which had badly hit the domestic manufacture of that article, and also retarded the production of sugar-cane. Syed Haidar Reza was the moving spirit of *Swadeshi* in Delhi. Riots and assaults on Europeans occurred in Lahore and Rawalpindi following the conviction of the editor of the *Punjabee*. Government retaliated by deporting to Mandalay Sirdar Ajit Singh on May 3, 1907, and Lajpat Rai on May 10, 1907.

Bipin Chandra Pal was the Prometheus who brought fire to the politically languid South. The Extremists sent Bipin Chandra Pal as their political evangel to preach the message of boycott, *Swadeshi*, and *Swaraj* in the Madras Presidency. In April, 1907 Bipin Chandra addressed meetings in the east coast towns, and then in the first week of May he delivered three fiery orations in the city of Madras itself. In the picturesque language of Tarachand, "Bipin Chandra Pal's thunderous rhetorical speeches sounded loud on the beaches and vied with the roar of ocean-waves breaking on the shore." This generated tremendous patriotic fervour among the students and the youth of the Madras Presidency. The students of the Government college at Rajmundry observed *hartal* (non-attendance) under the influence of Pal's speeches.

The soul of a distinguished advocate, Chidambaram Pillai had been prepared beforehand for receiving the message of Bipin Chandra. A young Bengali revolutionary, then known as Tarak Brahmachari and later as the distinguished Professor Tarak Nath Das of the United States, was in 1906 the guest of Chidambaram for some time before the formers' escape to the U.S.A. Tarak Brahmachari had initiated Chidambaram Pillai into the service of the nation.

Chidambaram Pillai and his associate Subramanya Siva went about touring the districts of Madras calling upon the people to adopt boycott and Swadeshi as weapons for winning Swaraj for India. In a speech delivered at Tuticorin Chidambaram Pillai called Bipin Chandra Pal the Lion of Swaraj and asked people to follow his directions.

Bipin Chandra Pal was due to be released on March 9, 1908 after his six months imprisonment. So great was his fame and popularity among the people of Madras that Chidambaram Pillai asked them to raise the standard of independence on that day to celebrate the occasion. On the 9th March, 1908 Chidambaram Pillai delivered a fiery speech in the town of Tinnevelley in which he exhorted the people to follow the dictates of Bipin Chandra Pal regarding boycott and Swadeshi with full vigour. If they did that, Chidambaram assured they would win Swaraj within six months. Government arrested Chidambaram Pillai and Subramanya Siva on the 12th March, 1908. The people of Tinnevelley infuriated by the arrest of their beloved leaders, set fire to all government offices in the town, and destroyed the buildings on the 13th March, 1908. The revolt was finally put down by the military, and later twenty seven persons were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for the Disturbances.

Repercussions of the movement were also felt in the other parts of India, though in a less degree.

Surendra Nath Banerjee (A Nation in Making) writes, "It is, however, in the industrial line that the national activities received an unprecedented stimulus." Not only new cottage industries, but also large-scale enterprises sprang up all over the country. As foreign cloth was the chief target of the agitators both handloom weaving and Textile Mills got a tremendous boost from the movement, and the Cotton Mills in Western India never had it better. Match and soap factories, tanneries and potteries sprouted out everywhere. Among new industrial ventures in Bengal were the Banga Luxmi Cotton

Mills, the Bengal National Bank, the National Insurance Company, the Hindustan Co-operative Insurance company, and the Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works, started by Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy.

The entire capital of Tata Iron and Steel Company, which had refused all government and foreign help, was subscribed by Indians within three months. The fiery nationalist leader of the south, Chidambaram Pillai himself organized an Indian shipping company—the Tuticorin-Colombo Steamer Co.

What is a nation without a National Flag? The leaders of the Swadeshi movement in Bengal did not fail to realize the need for a national flag, and did design one.

On this subject Dr. Bhupendranath Dutt in his Bengali book-Bharater Dwitiya Swadhinatar Sangram-has reproduced excerpts from a contemporary report appearing in the Sanjivani—the well-known Bengali weekly.

On the 20th October, 1905, the day on which the partition of Bengal was to take effect, the first Indian National Flag was hoisted in the compound of the proposed Federation Hall, opposite the University Science College on Upper Circular Road with the bursting of 101 crackers by Surendranath Banerjee. The hoisting was greeted with loud acclamation and lusty shouts of Bande Mataram.

The same flag was hoisted at the annual session of the Congress held in Calcutta at the end of 1906 under the Presidentship of Dadabhai Naoroji. The volunteers of the Congress session wore also a replica of the flag on their badges. So this was the first National flag of India, and of the Indian National Congress.

What was the design of this flag? It was a tricolour with three horizontal stripes arranged like this:

Top—Red with eight white lotuses embossed thereon;
 Middle—Saffron or Yellow with the words Bande Mataram in devnagri script imprinted in deep blue;
 Bottom—Green displaying on the left a white sun, and on the

right crescent with star.

The lotus, according to Rishi Rajnarain Bose, was the national flower of India. The tricolour had really been chosen after the famous tricolour of the French Revolution. They stood for liberty, equality, and fraternity. But to avert the wrath of the British authorities, it was given out that the three colours represented the three communities of India-Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs. The eight lotuses stood for the eight provinces of India. The sun symbolized the Hindus, and the Crescent and Star the Muslims. Who designed this flag Sachindra Prasad Bose, Secretary of the Anti-Circular Society and some of his friends designed the flag and had it approved by Surendranath Banerjee. Sachindra Prasad Bose was an ardent lieutenant of Surendranath.

The first National Flag of India gained even international celebrity. Madam Cama a rich patriotic Parsi widow then residing in Paris, hoisted this flag at the World Socialist Conference held at Stuttgart in Germany in 1907. Hem Chandra Das (Kanungo), a revolutionary and artist from Midnapur in Bengal, who was then in Paris learning to prepare explosives, designed for Madam Cama the flag, which was an exact replica of the national flag described in details above.

We may tell here the story of the subsequent transformations of India's National Flag till Independence.

In 1921 the National Flag of the Congress, Virtually the National Flag of India was redesigned with the approval of Mahatma Gandhi. It was also a tricolour, but the yellow or Saffron in the middle gave place to white. The lotuses, Bande Mataram, Sun and Crescent were all removed. In their place was embossed a charka, or spinning wheel in the middle.

The All India Congress Committee at its meeting held in Bombay in August, 1931 adopted the following resolution concerning the National Flag :-

The National Flag shall be three-coloured, horizontally arranged, but the colours shall be saffron, white and green in

the order stated here from top to bottom, with the spinning wheel in dark blue in the centre of the white stripe, it being understood that the colours have no communal significance, but that Saffron shall represent courage and sacrifice, white peace and truth, and green shall represent faith and chivalry, and the spinning wheel the hope of the masses. The proportions of the flag should be fly to hoist as three to two. (Congress in Evolution—D. Chakravarti and C. Bhattacharya).

Bengal's Swadeshi movement also gave to Indians their National Anthem. Could it be said of any that he was the Rousseau of the Bengal revolution, it could be affirmed of only Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the giant litterateur and thinker. Bankim's great mind must have been feeling for some time the need of a national anthem for his people. This is indicated by the ecstatic language in which he greeted a song written by Satyendranath Tagore, the Civilian second son of Maharshi Devendranath and elder brother of poet Rabindranath. That song was sung in the opening of the second session of the Hindu Mela in 1868. This song opened with the lines :

Mile sab Bharat Santan,
Ek tan, mano-pran,
Gao Bharater Yasogan.

unite all ye children of Bharat
In one voice mind and heart
and sing the glory of Bharat.

of this song Bankim Chandra wrote in noble and eloquent Bengali :

Let this noble song be sung in every corner of India. Let it echo in the caves and crevices of the Himalayas. Let it murmur through the leaves of trees guarding the banks of the Ganges, Jamuna, Indus, Narmada, and the Godavari. Let it resound in the thunderous roll of the Eastern and Western seas. Let the heart—strings of two hundred million Indians be attuned to its music.

Due to bad health, and family troubles Bankim had to come to his ancestral home at Kanthalpara on eight months leave in 1876. During his stay there on a sudden spurt of lofty inspiration he composed the Bande Mataram song. It lay neglected for a time in his desk. It was printed in the pages of Bangadarshan in a rather casual fashion. When Bangadarshan reappeared under the proprietorship of Bankim's brother-Sanjib Chandra Chatterjee, Bankim wrote in it serially, during 1880, his celebrated novel, Anandamath. In it was incorporated an improved and revised form of the Bande Materam song. Anandamath was published in book-form in 1882.

After a protracted illness and after suffering long from family troubles Bankim breathed his last on 8th April 1894. Even then this great song attracted little public attention. Bankim himself had, however, prophesied that a day would come when his countrymen would realise the value and significance of the song, or hymn to the mother land.

In the Calcutta session of the Congress held in 1896 Rabindranath sang this song. But Bande Mataram came to its own when the flood of the Swadeshi movement innundated Bengal. The song was sung at thousands of public meetings held all over Bengal. At the mammoth public meeting held in the Town Hall of Calcutta on the 7th August, 1905 to voice popular protest against the partition of Bengal shouts of Bande Mataram rent the welkin for the first time. Ever since the opening words of the song, Bande Mataram-Mother I bow to thee-became a stirring call to patriotism and self-sacrifice. Bande Mataram gradually spread its magic spell over the whole of India.

In its original form the Bande Mataram song was the National Anthem of the Bengali people. The words, "sapta Koti Kantha"—seventy million voices clearly indicate that.

Later on, after slight emendations, the song came to encompass the entire population of India.

In the Congress session held in 1937 Bande Mataram was

formally given the status of India's National Anthem, and it continued to be so till Independence.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee gave India a magnificent and superb National Anthem-solemn in cadence, sonorous in diction, sublime in thought, serene in beauty, sweet in melody-soul-stirring and nobly inspiring. Had Bankim done nothing else for his people he would still deserve to be enshrined in their hearts for this priceless gift to India. This great song inspired every Indian fighter for freedom-armed or unarmed. Young patriots bore flogging by the brutal British police with the cry of **Bande Mataram** on their lips ; unarmed Satyagrahis faced merciless assaults by the British police with sticks and batons shouting **Bande Mataram** ; brave revolutionaries with dauntless mien and unfaltering steps mounted the gallows, paying their last homage to their dear motherland with those two words- **Bande Mataram-Mother I bow to thee.**

The Swadeshi movement put the final seal to Bengal's primacy in the national life of India-a Primacy which lasted till the advent of Mahatma Gandhi on the political stage of India. This primacy of Bengal was freely and unreservedly acknowledged by eminent leaders from other parts of India. The gifted Marathi leader, Gopale Krishna Gokhale expressed it brilliantly in one sentence :

“What Bengal thinks to-day, India thinks to-morrow”.

The greatest Indian Muslim leader of the nineteenth century, Sir Syed Ahmed paid glowing tribute to the Bengalis in superb language. Said he :

“I assure you that the Bengalis are the only people of our country whom we can be properly proud of, and it is only due to them that knowledge, liberty, and patriotism are progressing in our country. I can truly say that they are the head and crown of all communities in Hindusthan.”

SWADESHI STRUGGLE AND THE CONGRESS

The Swadeshi struggle in Bengal burst forth as a spontaneous and universal upsurge of the people of Bengal against a particularly perfidious ukase of Albion. The Indian National Congress had no part in starting it, or directing its course. Still, such a tremendous political event as the Revolt of 1905 in Bengal could not but have strong impact on the national organization of India.

Long before 1905, the shadows of a coming political storm were gathering round that body. The founding fathers of the congress in reverent language, protesting their undying loyalty to the British Sovereign and their Viceroy in India, had been praying and petitioning for small political mercies. They had been agitating for these in the press and on the platform scrupulously confining themselves within the bounds of law. Even so, they had failed miserably to draw even a drop of political concession from the stony—hearted British imperialists.

Not unnaturally, some new ardent spirits in the Congress felt utterly disgusted with the futile mendicancy of the leaders, and called for militancy in the language and approach of the Congress towards the British authorities. These new leaders wanted that they should put forward the demand for self-government by Indians in a bold and forthright manner. Indications of this new political cry-militancy, not mendicancy-appeared in Tilaks Kesari, and Paranjpae's Kal. They also emphasized the point that the Indian National Congress in the existing form was purely an organization of the educated middle classes, and it had no contact with the masses of India. In an article with the caption A Dynamic Policy for the Congress, Tilak Wrote :

“Political rights must be fought for. The Moderates think these can be won by persuasion. We think that they can be

got by pressure. The Congress must be turned into an organization working continuously and energetically." Paranjpe's Kal prophesied the emergence in future of a new Congress, and said,

"The present Congress is composed of the educated class, but the Congress to which we allude, will be composed of uneducated masses." These views of Tilak and his group found brilliant and vigorous support from the pen of a new charismatic figure who entered the Indian political arena in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

Within a few months of his arrival in Baroda in 1893 Sri Aurobinda Ghosh started contributing a series of articles to the English Weekly Indu Prakash of Bombay. Altogether he wrote eleven articles under the caption New Lamps for old in Indu Prakash, whose editor at the time was K. G. Deshpande, a Cambridge friend of Aurobinda's.

In these articles Aurobinda brilliantly attacked the composition and leadership of the Indian National Congress. He wrote—

"The Congress wanted to make England's yoke easy, and its burden light, but not to remove the yoke altogether. And again he asserted, that Congress could not speak out the truth fearlessly because it was afraid of the British rulers. Repeatedly he stated that the Congress was composed wholly of the middle class, and was agitating for political rights that would benefit that class only. Congress had no contact with the submerged masses of the country, and cared nothing for the removal of their ignorance and poverty. In one article Aurobinda came out as an ardent advocate of revolution. On September 18, 1893, Aurobinda wrote in the Indu Prakash that the self-appointed Leaders of the Congress would better not forget the Lessons of history of a country, that is, France where the ignorant masses through "purification of blood and fire blotted out in five terrible years the accumulated Oppression of thirteen centuries." Aurobinda praised Tilak as the right kind

of Leader of his people.

While the political tempest that broke forth in Bengal in 1905 brought new recruits to this militant group, notably Bipin Chandra Pal in Bengal and Lajpat Rai in the Punjab, it also sharpened the differences between the two groups in the Congress.

There was no difference in the Swadeshi part of the Bengal movement. It was the defiant and dynamic part-boycott of British goods-which scared the moderates. To Tilak and his group boycott was the vital thing-the political weapon by the use of which they would force the British to grant India Swaraj, or self-government. Tilak, it may be noted incidentally, placed far greater reliance on the efficacy of boycott of British goods as a political weapon than warranted.

Tilak's group is often referred to as Extremists. They called themselves Nationalists, and it is better to refer to them as such, reserving the term Extremist for those who engaged in a violent struggle against Britishers. The leaders of the Moderates at the time were G. K. Gokhale, Sir Phirozeshah Mehta, Surendranath Banerjee, and Madan Mohan Malaviya. "Gokhale would leave alone the word" boycott which implied a vindictive desire to injure another, and which created unnecessary ill-will against ourselves." Surendranath Banerjee considered boycott as only a temporary measure to fight the injustice of Bengal partition, to be dropped as soon as partition was annulled by the Government. Madan Mohan Malaviya did not favour boycott. Apart from that there was wide difference between the two groups concerning the political objectives aimed at. Moderates would be satisfied with a marginal participation by Indian national leaders in the governance of their own land. The Nationalists demand was far more radical. As Tilak put it pithily : "I want to have the key to my own house. Self-government is our goal."

The Congress session held in Madras in 1903 adopted a resolution expressing its deep concern at the policy of the

government of India in breaking up the territorial integrity of Bengal.

In the Bombay session of 1904 Sir Henry Cotton, the President said :

“The proposal to break up Bengal against the loudly expressed wishes and sentiments of the people of Bengal can only be described as the most arbitrary and unsympathetic evidence of irresponsible and autocratic statesmanship.”

The Banaras session of the congress in 1905 held under the presidentship of Gopal Krishna Gokhale grew stormy over the Bengal movement. The session ultimately passed two resolutions on the topic. One resolution recorded emphatic protest against the partition of Bengal in the face of the strongest opposition on the part of the people of the province. The second “protested against the repressive measures which have been adopted by the authorities in Bengal after the people there have been compelled to resort to the boycott of foreign goods as a last protest, and perhaps the only constitutional and effective means left to them of drawing the attention of the British public.”

The Banaras congress, however, refused to adopt the boycott resolution.

Gokhale in his presidential address had stated the Moderate creed in the following words :

“The goal of the Congress is that India should be governed in the interest of Indians themselves, and that in course of time a form of government should be attained in this country similar to what exists in the self-governing colonies of the British Empire.”

The cleavage between the two wings of the Congress was manifest and threatened to lead to a head on collision in the near future.

The opposition between the two groups has been put lucidly and fully by R. P. Masani in his life of Dadabhai Naoroji :

"This anti-thesis between their view points marked a revolutionary change in the mind of the new generation. It was not a mere emotional conflict, nor was it a contest for power. It was essentially an intellectual conflict, a conflict of ideology. Self-government under British paramountcy was the goal of the old school, freedom from foreign control was the ideal of the new. Constitutional agitation was the accepted method to which the elders wished to adhere ; the rebels demanded a radical change in that method. Even they, except a few revolutionaries among them, did not advocate violence at that stage.

There was, however, such a weapon as boycott to which they thought they could resort-boycott of British goods, and, if necessary of councils. Such actions, they felt, would be constitutional and legitimate."

Who would be the President of the Congress at the end of the year 1906 ? The question might lead to a battle royal between the Nationalists and Modenates. The former wanted Bal Gangadhar Tilak to be the next President. Such a prospect scared the Moderates. Surendranath Banerjee and Bhupendranath Bose, the two veteran Moderate leaders of Bengal had a brain wave. They sent a cable to Dadabhai Naoroji in London to accept the Presidentship of the Congress for the third term. Dadabhai assented. The young Nationalists had the grace not to oppose the Grand old Man of India.

The Congress session held in Calcutta in 1906 under the presidentship of Dadabhai Naoroji was a landmark in the history of India's freedom struggle, even though it only postponed, but could not avert the coming clash between the two wings in the Congress. In his presidential address Dadabhai Naoroji declared :

"Just as the administration of the United Kingdom in all its services, departments, and details was in the hands of the people of that country, so should it be in India. As in the United Kingdom and the colonies, all the Taxation and legisla-

tion, and power of spending the taxes were in the hands of the representatives of the people, so should it be in India. The financial relations between England and India must be adjusted on a footing of equality. We do not ask for any favours. We want only justice. The whole matter could be compressed in one word-self-government, or Swaraj."

The venerable veteran's swan song in India's great national organization, which he had tended and nourished with fostering care through two decades, mentioned the word Swaraj.

This word 'Swaraj' will undergo progressive interpretation ~~with the passage of time will it will stand for 'Dharm Swaraj', or~~ — complete independence.

On the controversial boycott resolution there was a heated discussion in the open session. Finally, the resolution moved by Bipin Chandra Pal that the boycott movement inaugurated in Bengal by way protest against the partition of the province, "was and is legitimate" was carried. The Nationalists, thus, scored the point which they had failed to carry in the Banaras session of the Congress.

It is interesting to note that Mohammed Ali Jinnah acted as Naorojis Secretary, and Muhammad Iqbal composed the famous song—"Sare Jahan se achha Hindusthan Hamara"—in the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1906.

The intervention of Dadabhai, however, only imposed a temporary truce ; it did not bring about peace between the two warring wings of the Congress. The Bengalee of S. N. Banerjee hailed Dadabhai's presidential address as "the political gospel of the new era." But Aurobinda Ghosh's Bande Mataram lamented over it under the caption, "The great Refusal."

It was decided in Calcutta that the venue of the next session would be Nagpur. But who would be President ? Aurobinda and his group wanted either Lajpat Rai, or Tilak. Tilak himself would have liked Lajpat Rai to be the next president. Lajpat Rai himself did not want to be drawn into controversy, and preferred to stay out of it.

The Reception Committee formed at Nagpur to elect the President failed to do so, as neither party could muster the required majority of three-fourths of the members. Then, the All India Congress Committee met in the house of Sir Phirozeshah Mehta in Bombay and selected Surat, supposed to be a stronghold of Mehta, as the scene of the next session. The Moderates also chose Sir Rash Bihari Ghosh, the eminent lawyer and philanthropist to be the next president.

The Nationalists were annoyed over the shifting of the venue, and over the choice of the President.

Just three weeks before the Surat session a full-dress rehearsal of what was to happen there occurred in a District Political conference in Bengal. On the 7th and 8th December, 1907 was held the Midnapur District Political Conference. This was attended by the Moderate leader Surendranath Banerjee. Two important Nationalist leaders, Shri Aurobinda Ghosh and Shamsundar Chakravarti also came down from Calcutta to attend the conference. The Nationalists were backed up by a strong contingent of local young revolutionaries, led by Satyendranath Bose, who later became a martyr. The first days proceedings grew stormy over the interpretation of the word "Swaraj" in different ways by the rival groups. The other important bone of contention was the resolution asking for setting up of Akhras, or gyms in every village not only for developing the health and strength of youngmen, but also to serve as a village defence force. The Moderates objected that the making of Akhras into village defence units would make them a rival to the government's police organization, and they, therefore, could not support such a proposal. There were shouts and counter-shouts, the President of the conference was heckled and order could only be resorted in the conference when the Moderate leaders called in the police. On the second day of the conference the Moderates and the Nationalists met separately in two different places in the town of Midnapur.

When the session of the Congress started at Surat on the

banks of the Tapti the scenes witnessed earlier on the banks of the Kangsabati at Midnapur were re-enacted on a larger scale.

Surendranath Banerjee (A Nation in Making) writes :

"There was a strong party in favour of the election of Mr. Tilak as President and they would not have Sir Rash Bihari Ghosh to preside over the Congress. Rather that the Congress should be broken up than that Rash Bihari Should preside. That was the feeling of this party, and the Congress was broken up. Chairs, and shoes, and slippers were flung at the leaders, the platform was rushed."

The session opened on the 26th December, 1907. Tilak rose to oppose the election of Sir Rash Bihari Ghosh as the President. This caused an uproar and the session adjourned for next day. On the second day Tilak walked up to the rostrum to address the delegates. But he was not allowed to speak. Some delegates tried to push him ; a shoe was hurled at him, which missing him hit Surendranath Banerjee and Phirozeshah Mehta. Pandemonium reigned in the pandal. Phirozeshah Mehta called in the police who cleared the pandal. The Congress had split.

Immediately afterwards the Moderates assembled at a meeting, and hurriedly drafted the new creed of the Congress. It laid down that self-government within the empire was the goal of the Congress ; and that it was to be attained by purely constitutional means. It was obligatory upon everyone to sign this creed before he could become a member of the Congress. The new constitution of the Congress laid down-Article I—The objects of the Indian National congress was the attainment by the people of India of a system of Government similar to that enjoyed by the self governing members of the British Empire and a participation by them in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with those members. These objects are to be achieved by constitutional means by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration and by promoting national unity, fostering public spirit, and

developing and organizing the intellectual, moral, economic, and industrial resources of the country. Article 2—Every delegate to the Indian National Congress shall express in writing his acceptance of the objects of the Congress as laid down in Article 1 of the constitution and his willingness to abide by the constitution, and by the Rules of the Congress hereto appended.

This constitution with some amendments was adopted by the Bankipore session of the Congress in 1912.

The soul of Allan Octavian Hume must have rejoiced over this new development in the Congress even after twenty-two years since its foundation. The object with which he had sponsored the birth of the Congress was to wean educated Indians away from the path of political extremism and win them over to constitutional ways.

The Nationalists refused to sign the pledge and went out of the Congress. The Moderates continued to rule the roost in the Congress till 1916, and Sir Rash Bihary Ghosh presided over the next session of the Congress held in Madras in 1908.

Viscount Morley, the liberal disciple of Gladstone, became Secretary of State for India in 1908. He fascinated and hypnotized the mild and timid Gopal Krishna Gokhale by holding out the prospect of a large measure of self-Government for Indians in the near future. Through the good offices of Gokhale, Morley succeeded in isolating the Indian Nationalists, and in keeping the Moderates politically contented and complacent. The Government of India came down with a heavy hand on the Nationalist stalwarts.

India's national struggle instead of surging forward with an added momentum suffered a set-back at Surat, and in consequence a temporary decline in its vigour followed.

A SECOND FRONT AGAINST NATIONALIST INDIA

Earl Minto, who succeeded Curzon to the Viceroyalty was a subtler and more secretive Machiavelli of imperialism than the latter. Curzon was an extrovert ; pompous, vain he loved to hear his own oratory. Minto was an introvert, and preferred to keep his counsels to himself, and indulged in back-stair intrigues. Curzon had attempted to break up the already strongly united and well-consolidated Bengali Hindu nationalism. It proved a hard nut to crack. Minto focussed his attention on the consolidating, but not yet consolidated Indian nationalism. He would drive a wedge between the two major communities of India, and thereby check the growth and development of an emerging Indian nationalism.

Curzon had done his worst in trying to detach the Muslims of Bengal from the Hindus, and set the former against the latter. His devilish game did not succeed too well, but it did not also fail altogether. In April and May, 1906 in Mymensingh, where the Muslims were in majority, there were communal riots in which the Hindus suffered grievously. Communal riots on a bigger scale recurred in 1907 at Comilla, and at Jamalpur in the District of Mymensingh. Mullahs went about preaching a revival of Islam, and proclaiming that the British Government was on their side. They went about telling people that no penalty would be exacted for disobeying Hindu authorities, for the looting of Hindu shops, or the abduction of Hindu women. A notorious Red Pamphlet, circulated everywhere, preached the boycott of Hindu shops, products of Hindu industry, and the opening of Muslim schools. It proclaimed the Hindus have robbed us of our wealth, honour, and glory of Islam. They spread the Swadeshi net to take our lives. Lowest of all is he who cries Bande Mataram with the Hindus.

Now to the machinations of Minto. Col. Dunlop Smith, Private Secretary to Viceroy Minto and Archbold, Principal Aligarh Muslim College were directed to work together, and instruct Muslim leaders to take certain steps for their political well-being. The Muslim leaders should lead a deputation to the Viceroy and submit to him a memorandum asking for recognition of the rights and interests of the Muslim community, They should demand that the Muslims should have reserved separate representation in the legislatures and other public bodies. The Viceroy's emissaries-Col. Dunlop Smith and Principal Archbold carefully tutored and groomed the Muslim leaders as to what to do and what to pray for.

Accordingly, on the 1st of October, 1906 a Muslim delegation waited on the Viceroy at Simla. Moulana Mohamid Ali once described it as a "Command performance." The delegation consisted of 35 members and was led by H.H. the Aga Khan. He has himself stated that the objective of the delegation was to obtain independent political recognition from the British government that the muslims were a nation within a nation.

The delegation in the memorandum submitted to the Viceroy prayed for (1) election of Muslims to the provincial councils through separate Muslim electorates, and in numbers not in proportion to their population, but in accordance to their political importance ;

(2) election of Muslims to the Imperial Legislative Council through separate electorates in sufficient numbers so that Muslims may not be an ineffective minority.

Other demands of the delegation were that there should be a Muslim on the Viceroy's Executive Council : a Muslim University should be established ; the competitive examination should be discontinued, and a Muslim quota should be reserved in the I.C.S. ; in every High Court there should be Muslim Judges.

In his reply Minto addressed the delegates as "the descendants of a conquering and ruling race," and promised Government would consider their demands with utmost sympathy. Secretary of State Morley once said, "Minto had started the Moslem hare in 1906." But he, nonetheless, accepted the principle that the Mohammedan community was entitled to a separate representation on the council of the governor-general, and the provincial legislatures commensurate with its numbers and political and historical importance.

It is a pity the Congress and national leaders hardly took any notice at the time of this portentous and sinister event. Shortly after-wards another development occurred which was also ominous in significance. The Muhammadan Educational conference met at Dacca in December, 1906. Nawab Salimulla of Dacca invited the Muslim leaders assembled there to a meeting. They met under the Chairmanship of Nawab Waker-ul-Mulk, who in an Urdu speech called for the organization of the Muslims of India in a separate political body. Salimulla, thereupon, proposed the formation of the new body ; Hakim Amjmal Khan seconded it. The new organization was given the name of the All India Muslim League. Its objects were defined as follows :

- (1) promotion of feelings of loyalty to the British Government ;
- (2) protection and advancement of the political rights and interests of the Muslims of India ;
- (3) prevention of the rise of hostility to other communities.

Morley welcomed the formation of the Muslim League as a "native opposition to the Congress."

While moving for the second reading of the Indian councils Bill in the House of Lords Morley made the following observation :

"Let us not forget that the differences between Mohammedanism and Hinduism is not a mere difference of

articles of religious faith and dogma. It is a difference in life, in tradition, in history, in all the social things as well as articles of belief that constitute a community."

In the future one will hear all the points mentioned by Morley in the above statement from the lips of Qaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah times without number. Morley spoke about the factors as constituting a community, Jinnah insisted they constituted a nation. But Morley had also declared that the inhabitants of India constituted nations, and not a nation.

As sops to the Moderates Morley appointed in 1907 Sir K. G. Gupta and Syed Hussain Bilgrami to the Council of India London. In 1909 Sir S.P. Sinha (afterwards Baron Sinha of Raipnr) was appointed to the Governor-General's Executive Council as Law Member.

Then came the much-heralded Indian Councils Act, 1909, otherwise known as the Morley Minto Reforms. It provided :

(1) Indians were to be appointed to the India Council, London ; there was to be an Indian in the Viceroy's Executive council, and the provincial Executive councils.

(2) The Imperial Legislative council was expanded-the maximum number of additional members being raised from 16 to 60, of whom not more than 28 could be officials. It provided for the first time for the entry of elected representatives into the imperial Legislature.

(3) The Provincial Legislative Councils were also expanded. The maximum number of additional members of the Legislative Councils of the Punjab and Burma was fixed at 30, and for the other provinces at 50. The principle of election was frankly accepted. While in the Imperial Legislative Council a standing official majority was maintained, in the Provincial councils non-officials (elected and nominated) constituted the majority. Only Bengal secured elected majority in her Legislative council.

(4) Power was given to non-official members to move resolutions on public questions. This afforded them an opportunity for criticising the measures and policy of the Government, though without exercising any control over them. Indeed, Morley was careful to tell the House of Lords that he was not inaugurating parliamentary institution in any sense in India.

(5) The most sinister and pernicious feature of the Act, however, was the introduction of the principle of separate electorates for Muslim and non-Muslims. Seats were reserved for Mohammedans in the Provincial Legislatures.

Weightage was also granted to the Muslim community in allocating to them the quota of reserved seats. Election to the reserved seats were to be through separate communal electorates. The Muslims were given weightage in the central legislature also.

In fact, the Morley-Minto reforms embodied all the demands put forward by the Aga Khan delegation before Viceroy Minto on the 1st of October, 1906. What momentous effect this feature of Indian councils Act, 1909 was to have on the future course of events in India will be clear from the following extract from the Memoirs of H. H. the Aga Khan :

“Lord Minto’s acceptance of our demands was the foundation of all future constitutional proposals for India by successive British Governments, and its final inevitable consequence was the partition of India and the emergence of Pakistan.”

Earl Minto had succeeded in obstructing and checking the growth of a strong Indian nationalism politically uniting the Hindus and Muslims of India. It was a striking triumph of that Machiavelli of Imperialism.

So subtly had Minto and Morley carried out their sinister design that the Moderate leaders of the Congress, assembled

in the annual session at Madras in 1908, without caring to probe into the provisions of the Bill "sang paeans of praise for the bill, and shouted hallelujahs for its author."

Better sense dawned on the Congress leaders at the Lahore session in 1909. The Congress deemed it its duty to place its strong disapproval of the creation of separate electorates on the basis of religion ; regretted the excessive and unfairly preponderant share of representation given to the Muslims ; unjust, invidious and humiliating distinction made between the Muslims and nonmuslims in the matter of elections, franchise, and the qualification of candidates, and deplored the general distrust shown towards the educated classes.

The Revolt of 1905 in Bengal, thus, set the pattern for the future political struggle in India. The nationalists will grow more and more determined to throw off the British yoke. The British imperialists will not only resist such attempts themselves, but will increasingly use the Muslims of India as a second front against the nationalists.

The scant attention paid at the time to the Satanic move of the British imperialist Machiavelli, Earl Minto by India's National leaders including Lokmanya Tilak betray their political immaturity, and lack of political foresight. How much superior to them was Mahatma Gandhi in political acumen and sagacity was demonstrated by his prompt and powerful reaction to the inclusion of separate electorates for Scheduled Caste Hindus in Ramsay Macdonald's Communal Award. He realised at once the catastrophic import of this new thrust of the imperialist poniard of Divide et Impera. It aimed at the splitting up and debilitating politically the great Hindu community of India which was carrying on the fight against British imperialism. Mahatma Gandhi staked his own life in a supreme bid to get this particular provision of the

Macdonald Award annulled. He went on his historic Fast unto Death over this issue. So priceless was Mahatma's life considered by all sections of Hindus then that they all agreed to a Formula—the Poona Pact—which averted the creation of separate electorates for the Scheduled castes.

What a cruel irony of history is it that after Mahatmaji had brought Swaraj to the people of India, as he had often promised his life was deemed so redundant, and even a liability to the nation by a very small section of the Hindus, and he was assassinated by a young Chitpavan Brahmin from Poona, one of the eternal votaries of Hindu Pat Padshahi !

Tragically enough, the earlier Congress leaders even endorsed Earl Minto's sinister design by accepting separate electorates for Muslims as one of the terms of the Lucknow Pact of 1916.

BOMBS AND BULLETS BURST IN BENGAL.

Ackroyd Aurobinda Ghosh was born in England on August 15, 1872. The first seven years of his life he spent in his motherland, but remained ignorant of his mother-tongue, Bengali. His father, Dr. Krishna Dayal Ghosh, I. M. S. sent him to Darjeeling to study in a school meant for European children only. Dr K. D. Ghosh wanted his son to be educated in an English environment. The next twelve years of Aurobinda's life were spent in England studying at ST. Paul's school in London, and in Cambridge.

As an adult Aurobinda set foot on Indian soil in 1893, after accepting service under the Gaekwad of Baroda. From 1893 to 1905 he stayed in that Marathi State with occasional short trips to Bengal. In 1901 he married Mrialini, daughter of Bhupal Chandra Bose.

When Aurobinda returned to his motherland in 1893 he was hardly a Bengali, or Indian. He could neither speak nor write his mother-tongue. Naturally, all the initial Indian influences that worked on him were predominantly Marathi. In his mental and spiritual outlook Aurobinda Ghosh became more a Marathi than a Bengali.

Aurobinda's extraordinary intellectual calibre enabled him to study and quickly grasp the Indian political situation. Within a few months of his arrival in Baroda he wrote that series of brilliant political essays, under the caption New Lamps for old in the English Bombay Weekly-Indu Prakash. In those writings, while he sharply denounced the policy of political mendicancy followed by the old Congress leaders, he extolled Lokmanya Tilak as the only worthy leader of his people. He had come under the magic spell of the Lion of Poona. Indeed, all his writings during his brief but stormy political adventure testify unmistakably that Aurobinda was

an admiring and faithful disciple of the-Lokmanya. Apart from the mighty influence of Tilak, Aurobinda, as he himself admits, was initiated into the secret armed revolutionary cult by Thakur Saheb of Poona, a noble of Udaipur State, domiciled in Poona, in 1902. Thakur Saheb, like Tilak had an abiding influence on political Aurabinda Ghosh. Lastly, as to yoga and spiritualism, which absorbed the last and lasting phase of Sri Aurobinda,s life, that also came from a Marathi. Aurobinda and his younger brother, Barindra, kumar Ghosh were initiated into the mysteries of Yoga by the Marathi, Vaskar Lele.

There were other influences working on the mind of Sri Aurobinda. One Jatindra Nath Banerjee, hailing from Village Channa in the District of Burdwan, Bengal had assumed the name of Jatinder Upadhyay, which seemed to convey the impression that he was a man from Uttar Pradesh, and not a Bengali, travelled to distant Baroda, and managed to enter into the military service of the Baroda State. He became one of the body guards of the Gaekwad. Jatindranath, a man of formidable physical stature and strength, had done all this because he believed in ousting the British from India through armed conflict. Naturally, as brother Bengalis living and serving together in distant Baroda, Aurobinda and Jatindra came close and influenced each other. Invited by the Gaekwad to deliver a series of lectures, Sister Nivedita went to Baroda. She had long discussions there with Sri Aurobinda on the political situation in India, and particularly in Bengal.

The upshot of it all was that Sri Aurobinda decided to start organising a secret revolutionary group in Bengal. As a preliminary move Aurobinda sent in 1902 Jatindra Nath Banerjee to Bengal with a letter of introduction to Saraladevi Chaudhurani Jatindra was to contact like-minded people and explore the possibilities of forming a secret revolutionary society in Bengal.

Luckily for Jatindra, he found a precursor in Barrister P. Mitter (Pramatha Nath Mitra). Due to social torture over his son's going overseas Pramatha Nath's father was goaded to become a convert to Christianity. P. Mitter's home was in Naihati, which was in close proximity to the ancestral residence of the great Bankim Chandra in kanthalpara. P. Mitter often visited Bankim's kanthalpara home and held long discussions with the mighty thinker and litterateur. Mitter became an ardent admirer and follower of Bankim. P. Mitter's heart was aflame with patriotic fire, and a resolve to break the shackles of slavery to foreign rule. He wanted, first, that the youth of the land should grow bold and strong through Gymnastics and athletics like sword and lathi-play, boxing, and jiu-jitsu. His programme was, therefore, to start a network of Gymnasiums over the whole of Bengal, and organize groups of youngmen round these physical culture centres. P. Mitter's idea, perhaps, was to develop in future revolutionary groups out of these Gymnasiums. But what is called revolutionary action was not yet on the card of Barrister P. Mitter. But there can be no doubt that P. Mitter's bent of mind was towards secret armed strike against the British.

Be that as it may, Barrister P. Mitter or Mitter Saheb as he was popularly called, founded the first revolutionary secret society in Bengal on the 24th March, 1903. Satish Chandra Bose, who was the right hand of P. Mitter in Calcutta started a Gymnasium in Madan Mitter Lane. P. Mitter named the secret society as "Anushilan Samity" from Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's famous essay entitled "Anushilan Tattwa". In 1906 P. Mitter also organized a branch of the Anushilan Samity at Dacca under Pulin Das. Das opened branches of the Samity all over East Bengal, and so far as the number of members was concerned Anushilan Samity grew up to be the largest revolutionary group in Bengal. But that

primacy was only quantitative and not qualitative. Dacca became later the headquarters of the Anushilan Samity.

Barrister P. Mitter asked his group of young men to cooperate fully with the Baroda party. Aurobinda's group used at first to be referred to as the Baroda party, or the Baroda group. Jatin Banerjee succeeded quickly in gathering a small number of young recruits, and started an "Akhra, or Gymnasium at 102 upper circular Road. The routine followed here was the same as was done in the Madan Mitter Lane Gymnasium run by Satish Bose under the direction of Barrister P. Mitter. Youngmen were trained in riding, lathi and sword play and other gymnastics. Physical and moral culture of the youth was the objective aimed at. Hurling of bombs and bullets against Britishers was not yet under contemplation.

A few month's after Jatindra Banerjee's arrival, Sri Aurobinda Ghosh, accompanied by his younger brother Barindra Kumar Ghosh, came from Baroda on a short visit to Bengal P. Mitter's group and the Baroda group ostensibly coalesced and a joint revolutionary committee was formed with Barrister P. Mitter as the president, Sri Aurobinda Ghosh and C. R. Das, Bar-at-Law (afterwards Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan) as Vice-presidents, and Surendranath Tagore as Treasurer. Jatindra Nath Banerjee was put in charge of the training of young recruits.

Almost simultaneously a strong revolutionary centre was opened in the town of Midnapur. Aurobinda and Barindra met at Midnapur their maternal uncles (mother's first cousins) Janendranath and Satyendranath Bose, sons of Abhoya Chandra Bose, younger brother of Rishi Rajnarain Bose. Janendranath and Satyendranath, together with Hem Chandra Das formed a local revolutionary Junta. Mainly through the efforts of Satyendranath young boys of the Town like Khudiram Bose, Jog Jiban Ghosh and a few others were

recruited into the secret society. If Dacca, after Calcutta, became the most important centre of P. Mitter's Anushilan Samity, Midnapur, next to Calcutta, was the most important branch of the Aurobinda group. Indeed, it was this Midnapur centre which actually established in Bengal the only "Bhowani Mandir" envisaged by Aurobinda as centres of revolutionary activities. A Bhowan Mandir ran for a short duration at a place called Fulkusma on the border-line between the Bankura and Midnapur districts. The British authorities later underlined this importance of Midnapur by instituting simultaneously the Midnapur Bomb Conspiracy case (Emperor Vs. Jog Jiban Ghosh and others) as a twin of the more famous Alipore Bomb conspiracy case (Emperor Vs. Barindra Kumar Ghosh and others). Two of the first four martyrs of Bengal were from Mipnapur.

Aurobinda returned to Baroda, but Barindra Kumar Stayed on in the Upper Circular Road Akhra. Jatindranath Banerjee had founded the Akhra and had been running the show there. But Barindra Kumar soon began to exercise his prerogative of fraternity to the leader. Banerjee was a military man and ruled the roost with a heavy hand and acted as a rough drill-sergeant. Jatindra Banerjee was expelled from the party and the Upper Circular Road Akhra broke up. In India public affairs and interests are not kept apart from private matters and personal considerations. As a result both in pre-independence and post-independence India wives, children and brothers of important political leaders have very often proved to be trouble-shooters, and a positive nuisance in the public life of the country, particularly so are the sons of Ministers.

There was a brief reconciliation with Jatin Banerjee, but he was expelled from the party a second time by the president, Barrister P. Mitter. In disgust he left politics and turned a Sanyasi taking the name of Niralamba Swami. Thus

disappeared into spiritual mysticism the first revolutionary emissary in Bengal of Sri Aurobinda Ghosh. A few years later the leader himself would traverse the path taken by Jatin Banerjee.

Barindra Kumar started a new Akhra on Grey Street, but that did not prosper, and Barindra Kumar in a huff went back to Baroda. He, however, came back to Bengal towards the end of 1904, and resumed his work of revolutionary organization.

Things began to hum really when Sri Aurobinda Ghosh came over from Baroda, accompanied by Charu Dutt I.C.S., brother-in-law of Raja Subodh Mallik to settle down and work in Calcutta in 1905. This event marked the beginning of revolutionary activities in Bengal. This was the nativity of revolutionary Bengal.

Like Minerva from Jupiter's head, revolutionary Bengal sprang out of the brain of Sri Aurobinda Ghosh. His was the concept, his the ideology, his the initiative and lead which ushered forth revolutionary Bengal that contributed such a glorious and ever-memorable chapter to the history India's struggle for independence. Aurobinda threw himself into the task with fierce intellectual energy and vigour. On the 26th December, 1905 was held a largely attended meeting of the revolutionaries of Bengal. Among the important decisions arrived at this meeting were the launching of revolutionary action, establishing "Bhowani Mandirs" at some places, and the starting of a weekly as the organ of the revolutionaries.

During a previous visit to Calcutta, Aurobinda had written anonymously a pamphlet No Compromise, which was widely distributed throughout Bengal. This was the first anonymous revolutionary pamphlet to appear in Bengal. In stirring language it exposed the iniquities of foreign rule, and excited anti British sentiment in the heart of the people. Then

followed a series of manifestoes in English and Bengali under the caption of Sonar Bangla.

Bhowani Mandir, (The Temple of Bhowani) written by Sri Aurobinda himself and published in 1905 set out the aims and objects of the revolutionaries. It openly preached the gospel of force as the only method and means for achieving national emancipation. Bhowani Mandir became the Bible of Bengal revolutionaries.

In March, 1906 came out the celebrated mouthpiece of the revolutionary group—"Jugantar." Aurobinda hurled sharpened intellectual darts at British imperialism through the columns of the English "Bande Mataram", while Bipin Chandra Pal poured vitriol through his writings in New India "Nothing raised the revolutionary tempo in Bengal higher than the reasoned fire and eloquence of Bipin Chandra Pal's tongue and pen. His impassioned advocacy of Boycott of British goods, and passive resistance to arbitrary British measures and laws roused popular indignation to fever pitch. For a time he became the idol of the youth of Bengal. While Aurobinda and Bipin Chandra impressed and inspired the elite and the highly educated, it was "Jugantar", and above all "Sandhya" which moved the mind and heart of the common man.

Two remarkable revolutionary compilations deserve special mention. One a collection of some important articles printed in the Jugantar, and entitled "Mukti Kon Pathe"—which is the path to Freedom—was the boldest and the clearest in its exposition of revolutionary doctrines and methods. "It pointed out that not much muscles was required to shoot Europeans, that arms could be acquired through firm determination and that weapons could be prepared clandestinely in some secret places. Indians could be sent to foreign countries to learn the art of making weapons. The assistance of Indian soldiers must be obtained. They should be made to realise the misery and wretchedness of the country. The

heroism of Shivaji must be extolled. As long as revolutionary work remained in infancy, expense could be met by subscriptions. But as work advanced money must be exacted from Society by the application of force."

(K. C. Ghosh—Roll of Honour)

The other 'Bartaman Rananiti'—(Modern Technique of Warfare) taught the methods of guerrilla warfare against the enemy.

It cannot be denied that there is much truth in the claim that it was the revolutionary youth of Bengal who spear-headed the Anti partition and Swadeshi movement.

But conversely, it has also to be admitted that the political ferment in Bengal created by that movement helped greatly the propagation of revolutionary ideas, and the organization of secret revolutionary societies.

In Central Calcutta an important revolutionary group was formed under the name of the Atmonnati Samity. The leading spirit of this group was Indranath Nandy. His father was a member of the Indian Medical Service. Other revolutionary groups like the Suhrid Samity of Mymensingh, the Pabna group etc. etc. came into existence.

The initiation of recruits into secret societies was done through a solemn religious ceremony. The initiate had to repeat a Mantra in Sanskrit touching the Gita and a sword with his hand. Of course, he had also to take a solemn vow. The things emphasized in this vow were usually.

- (a) Renouncing everything in the world to dedicate his life exclusively to the liberation of the motherland.
- (b) To observe strictest silence and secrecy about the affairs of the society ;
- (c) To observe party discipline, and render unquestioning obedience to the orders of the the leader, or leaders of the groups.

Let us have a brief glance at some of the prominent figures

among these revolutionary pioneers of Bengal. They were striking and remarkable personalities. Quite apart from being romantic revolutionaries many of them were men of parts. It seems the supreme revolutionary junta consisted of Sri Aurobinda Ghosh, Raja Subodh Mallik, and Charu Dutt I. C. S. We have already spoken a lot about the first two ; the third was the mystery man of the circle. Little is known about him. He was a Bombay I.C.S., and quite a linguist. There are several Bengali publications to his credit. He passed his last years at Santiniketan and Pondicherry. But Charu Dutt must have been an extraordinary figure to have held both a position in the highest echelon of the British bureaucracy, and also to have occupied a top place in the revolutionary hierarchy. Very close to the junta was Sister Nivedita (Margaret Noble), once again the nihilist, free from spiritual hypnosis, after the passing away of her great Master. She was tireless in her efforts to propagate revolutionary ideas among the youth of Bengal, to encourage them in holding steadfast to their ideal, and to organize new revolutionary cells. For instance, she visited the town of Midnapur to open an Akhra, or gymnasium, which was really intended to develop into a revolutionary centre. She stayed there a whole week lecturing to young men and students of the town. Although she was very active on the revolutionary fringe, Sister Nivedita did not actually step into the ring.

Three young enthusiasts Barindra Kumar Ghosh, Bhupendranath Dutt, and Abinash Chandra Bhattacharya who got fed up with mere gymnastic exercises and wanted to go in for the real revolutionary stuff-started the weekly Jugantar. But three senior members were in charge of supervision of the publication—Sri Aurobinda Ghosh, Sakharan Ganesh Dueskar, and Abinash Chandra Chakravarti, Sakharan Ganesh Deuskae, the Marathi Brahmin, domiciled in Bihar, who lived his life in Calcutta as a distinguished Bengali

journalist, was also the author of the famous publication "Desher Katha" (story of the Land). He was an inde-fatigable revolutionary worker, who instructed young recruits in politics, history and other branches of knowledge. Abinash Chandra Chakravarti was senior to the others in age, but he was a determined and dedicated revolutionary. He was a zemindar of Pabna and became also a Munsiff (a judicial officer of the Government). But he lost his service on the Police report that where-ever this Munsiff had been posted he started there a revolutionary cell. He even defrayed for a time the expenses incurred in running the Jugantar by selling some of his ancestral Properties. Debabrata Basu (after wards Swami Prajnanand) was an important member of the group. He was an crudite scholar and a store-house of information. He was an ideologist of the group. His thesis was that in India with her ancient tradition revolution could be preached only through the garb of religion.

Unfortunately, strict adherence to truth and fact in talk and conversarion was not a 'must' with him. Upendranath Bandopadhyay who dressed as a Sanyasi was a real humourist and a good writer of Bengali prose. But it has to be admitted that Sri Aurobinda Ghosh was more a man of ideas and letters than of action. What is called revolutionary action and organization was left in younger hands. Among these Barindra Kumar Ghosh was certainly the central figure. His enthusiasm and presence was almost ubiquitous. He was encouraging the young science student, Ullaskar Dutta to prapare bombs ; he was one of the founders of weekly Jugantar ; the famous Muraripukur Garden headquarters of the revolutionaries was his creation, It is no wonder that the Alipore trial made him the hero of this fascinating and romantic Drama of Bengal's first revolutionary outburst. Be it also noted that tongues of fire could always shoot out of the pen of Barindra Kumar Ghosh. Though not so young, Hem Chandra Das (Kanungo)

of Midnapur was a very active and remarkable personality. He had gone to France and learnt there the science and technology of preparing explosives. He was the one real trained explosives expert of the group. To raise funds for his foreign trip he had sold out some of his ancestral estates. He had then a family consisting of his wife, a son and a daughter. Hem Chandra Das was also a very good painter. Satyendra Nath Bose was another enthusiastic activist, but his field of work lay mostly in the town of Midnapur. The young student from Chandernagore Kanai Lal Dutta proved in the end to have been a most determined activist. Ullaskar Dutta was noteworthy for his fiery zeal.

Jogendra Nath Vidyabhusan, a Deputy Magistrate like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee wrote in Bengali the lives of Mazzini and Garibaldi and spoke to the youth of Bengal to emulate the lives of the Italian leaders.

He also acted as a link-man and mediator between revolutionary groups. Mention should also be made of a strange character who appeared in Calcutta at the time. Tahalram Gangaram was a man from Dera Ismail Khan in the North West Frontier Province. He went to England to compete for the I. C. S. but was unsuccessful in the examination. He used to deliver fiery, often abusive anti-British speeches in the parks and squares of Calcutta. Students flocked to hear his harangues. Tahalram even composed a National Anthem in English.

It is noteworthy that not a single Muslim was a member of this secret revolutionary society. Indeed, there never was a Muslim in the original Marathi and Bengali revolutionary groups.

The revolutionary centre at Muraripukur Garden, in the Manicktala area of Calcutta was opened in 1907. Premises number 32 Muraripukur Garden Lane was the property of Dr. K.D. Ghosh, father of Barindra Kumar. Barindra

through a document got it transferred to the secret revolutionary society. Muraripukur Garden, thus, became the celebrated headquarters of the group.

All the revolutionaries of Bengal assembled at two conferences presided over by Barrister P. Mitter—one in December, 1905, and the other in December, 1906 at the time of holding of the annual session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta in that year. The second was held at the residence of Raja Subodh Mallik on Wellington Square. That notwithstanding, the Baroda group, or the Aurobinda group, after the appearance of their weekly journal Jugantar, came to be known as the Jugantar group after the paper. Those working under the direct control and guidance of Barrister P. Mitter were named the Anushilan Samity. Practically the two groups parted company and their programme of action also differed.

Revolutionary Action :

It would seem that the supreme revolutionary junta of the Jugantar group selected the two lieutenant Governors of East Bengal and Assam, and Bengal-Bamfylde Fuller and Sir Andrew Fraser respectively as the first targets of armed assault. Apart from their importance as the Executive heads of the two provinces, both had become personally obnoxious to the Bengal extremists, Fuller because of his harsh measures against the Swadeshi movement in East Bengal, and Fraser for his ardent support to Curzon's scheme for partitioning Bengal.

Sir Bamfylde Fuller got priority as the object of their attack. An elaborate and long-persisted-in plan to murder him was pursued through the middle of 1906. Hem Chandra Das (Kanungo) of Midnapur was selected for the job, and was sent to Shillong from Calcutta to dispatch Fuller. Hem Chandra carried bombs and two revolvers as his weapons. He was to proceed under the advice and guidance of Barindra.

Kumar Ghosh. Hem Chandra Das himself has given a vivid and detailed story of this farcically futile attempt in his book- *Banglay Biplab Prachesta* (Attempt at Revolution in Bengal) written in Bengali. Barindra Kumar and Hem Chandra first chased Fuller in Shillong and Gauhati in Assam, but Fuller eluded their reach. Then the two would be assailants followed him to Barisal. Fuller never came within their range. The revolutionaries next waited for Fuller at Rangpur, where the Lieut-Governor was expected shortly. Here Barindra and Hem Chandra were joined by two others both of whom would come into limelight subsequently. These two were Prafulla Chaki of Bogra-Rangpur, destined to be Bengal's first revolutionary martyr, and Narendra Goswami destined to be killed later as the infamous approver of the Alipore Bomb Conspiracy case.

But the vigil of the revolutionaries at Rangpur was in vain. Fuller never came to Rangpur. He, instead, resigned his job and proceeded towards England via Goalundo. Hem Chandra and Parfulla Chaki rushed forward to Goalundo, but could not overtake Fuller. They, however, anticipated him at Naihati station, a few miles north of Calcutta. The two decided that as soon as Fuller's special train would leave Naihati station they would jump into the Train and shoot Fuller. They were totally foiled and befooled when the Lieut-governor's special, instead of going on towards Sealdha station, proceeded in the reverse direction to cross the Ganges and reach Howrah station via Bandel. From Howrah Fuller proceeded straight to Bombay, and then sailed away to England.

The revolutionaries chased Sir Bamfylde Fuller through Assam and East Bengal, but in the words of Hem Chandra himself, "the bombs and bullets never left our hands. They remained intact with us." What a farce and fiasco!

The revolutionaries had no better luck with the

Lientgovernor of Bengal, Sir Andraw Fraser, who, it seems, had a charmed life, like that of the well-known Commissioner of Police, Calcutta, Sir Charles Tegart. In October and November, 1907 attempts were made to blow up Sir Andrew Frasers special train by placing a bomb prepared by Ullaskar Dutt under the rails near Chandernagore. But nothing serious happened to the Lient-governor's special. A more serious attempt at wrecking Fraser's train by placing explosives under the railwaytrack occurred at Narayangarh in the district of Midnapur -on the 6th December, 1907. Barindra Kumar Ghosh, Bibhuti Bhusan Sarkar and a few other revolutionaries were involved in this attempt. The explosion caused a hole five feet deep and five feet wide, but the Lieunt-govarnor's train passed on unhindered.

This unsuccessful attempt had, however, a bizarre reper-cussion, which threw a lurid light on the character of the British Indian police, and the justice administered in British Indian law-courts. The government declared a reward of rupees one thousand and the Bengal Nagpur Railway a reward of rupees five thousand to be paid to those who would help in bringing the culprits of this outrage to book. The police people in their greed to pocket this prize-money arrested a gang of innocent Nagpuri Labourers who had been working on the railway lines near the site of the explosion. Through brutal torture the police made the unfortunate workers falsely to confess they had placed the mine under the railway track. The court held the labourers to be guilty of the crime, and sentenced them to transportation. Later, when some of the accused in the Alipore Bomb conspiracy case confessed that they were responsible for the Narayangarh train outrage, the judgement of the court against the Nagpuri workers had to be quashed, and the poor innocent men were at last set free. What a horrible rascality on the part of the British Indian police, and what base bias of British Indian courts to rely

blindly on police information and evidence does this incident betray! But this was no exceptional occurrence. It only holds up to the mirror the general trend of activities of the British Indian police, and of the verdicts of British Indian law-courts in what may be called political cases. Incidentally, the confessions made by Barindra Kumar Ghosh and others in the Alipore Bomb conspiracy case have been adversely criticised by some. But the confessions did one good thing, at least. The poor innocent Nagpuri workers were set at liberty as a result of those confessions.

There was another attempt to wreck the train of Sir Andrew Fraser in March, 1908. Fraser had a miraculous escape in the last and final attempt on his life. On the 7th of November, 1908, as Fraser was coming out of a meeting held in the Overtoun Hall of the college Street branch of the Y.M.C.A. Jiten Roychowdhury, a revolutionary youth tried to shoot at him point blank. But the trigger of his revolver did not work. Jiten was arrested on the spot, and later sentenced to ten year's rigorous imprisonment. In all the previous attempts on Fraser the revolutionaries relied on explosives, which repeatedly proved ineffective. In the last attempt they depended on bullets, which also turned out to be ineffective, because the revolver itself was defective.

Meanwhile, other sporadic actions by revolutionaries had continued. On the 23rd December, 1907, Mr Allen, former District Magistrate of Dacca was shot at by Sisir Guha in broad day light at Goalundo station. Allen was seriously injured, but recovered through excellent medical treatment. An infructuous attempt was made on a missionary by name Hickenbotham at Kusthia in the Nadia district reportedly by a young man named Baldev Roy. The Mayor of French Chandernagore Monsieur Tardeville, unlike his predecessors, was banuing public meetings, and trying to check smuggling of arms through Chandernagore. Angered over these

activities of his, the revolutionaries on the 11th April, 1908 hurled a bomb into his house with no damage done.

In February, 1908 a tragic accident cost the life of a young revolutionary named Prafulla Chandra Chakravarty. A bomb was prepared from Ullaskar Dutt's formula. A small hill called Dighiria at Deogarh in Bihar was selected for testing the bomb. Prafulla was asked to throw it on the hillside. When the bomb exploded its splinters injured Prafulla's brain seriously. He soon succumbed to his injuries. A precious life was, thus, lost through a most unfortunate accident.

The supreme revolutionary junta consisting of Sri Aurobinda Ghosh, Raja Subodh Mallik, and Charu Dutt I.C.S. now fixed on kingsford, the notorious Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta as the next target of revolutionary vengeance.

Kingsford was Calcutta's Presidency Magistrate from August 1904 to March, 1908, when he was transferred to Muzaffarpore in Bihar as District Judge. Kingsford had tried almost all the important political cases-the cases of Jugantar, Banda Mataram, Sandhya and others. He was a most harsh and convicting judge swayed by racial prejudice and political vindictiveness. One particular incident had roused terrible popular hatred against kingsford. Bipin Chandra Pal was then the hero and idol of the students and youth of Bengal. At the hearing of the Bande Mataram case, in connexion with which Bipin Chandra was sentenced to six months imprisonment, huge crowds used to gather in the Presidency Magistrate's court. People used to be lathi-charged by the police on the plea of controlling the crowds. On August 26, 1907 a white skinned inspector, named E.B. Huey went berserk and started showering kicks and blows at random on the crowd. Sushil Sen a lad of fifteen could brook it no longer and struck a mighty blow at Huey. Sushil

was arrested on the spot. Next day Kingsford sentenced Sushil to a punishment of fifteen lashes. The sentence was carried out mercilessly. Kavybisharad of the Hitavadi wrote a famous song on the event. It began :

“Bet mere Ki Ma Bholavi,
Ami Ki Mar Teman Chhele”.

Will you make me forget my mother by caning,
Am I such a son of my Mother ?

Indeed, even the Rowlatt committee had to record this concerning the judicial misdeeds of Kingsford.

“We must congratulate Mr. Kingsford for his escaping from the aim of Khudiram Bose. Mr Kingsfords' doings as Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta were both outrageous and satanic.” The epithet of “Kasai Kazi” (Butcher Judge) given to him by Brahmabandhab Upadhy of Saudhya was most appropriate and Kingsford fully deserved to be killed as a rabid dog.

First, what is called a book-bomb was sent to Kingsford through a bearer to his Tollygunge residence. The pages of the middle portion of a thick volume were cut away, and in the hollow thus created a bomb with a spring was so placed that it would explode as soon as the book was opened. But Mr. Kingsford did not open the book ; he simply took it from the hand of the bearer and deposited it in his book-shelf. He thought that somebody who had borrowed this book from him had returned it. When one of the accused in the Alipore Bomb conspiracy case subsequently revealed in his confession the story of the dispatch of the book-bomb, the police went to the residence of Kingsford at Muzaflarpore, fished out the book and destroyed the bomb. This book-bomb was undoubtedly the work of Hem Chandra Das of Midnapur.

Kingsford was transferred to Muzaffarpore. It was decided to send two revolutionaries to kill kingsford there. The two

selected for the job should be unknown to each other, and should be introduced to each other not by their real name, but by fictitious aliases. Barindra Kumar Ghosh selected Prafulla Chaki of Bogra-Rangpur and he was to assume the name of Dinesh Chandra Roy. The other was the choice of Hem Chandra Das and Satyendra Nath Bose of Midnapur. His name was Khudiram Bose, but he was to assume the name of Durgadas Sen.

Of Prafulla Chaki, alias Dinesh Chandra Roy we have already seen a lot in connexion with the plot to kill Sir Bamfylde Fuller. When Barindra Kumar was staying at Rangpur awaiting Fuller's arrival there, Prafulla was introduced to him by the local revolutionaries. Barindra Kumar was impressed by the courage and bearing of Prafulla, whom he at once made the associate of Hem Chandra Das in the last phase of Fuller murder plan.

Prafulla Chaki was a daring and intrepid youth eager to plunge into revolutionary action. He was born on the 10th December, 1888 in village Behar in the district of Bogra. His parents were Rajnarain Chaki and Swarnamayee Devi. Prafulla lost his father when he was aged only two. He had his education first near his native place, and then in the town of Rangpur. He had taken a very active and prominent part in the Swadeshi movement in Rangpur before he met Barindra Kumar Ghosh.

The ancestral home of Khudiram Bose was in village Mahubani under police station Kespur in the district of Midnapur. His father Tirlakyanath Bose was a Tehsildar of the Narajole Raj Estate. Khudiram was born on 3rd December, 1889 in the Habibpur area of the town of Midnapur. At the age of six Khudiram lost both his father, and mother, Luxmipriya Devi. He was brought up under the care of his eldest sister after the death of his parents. Khudiram had a strong and supple body. He was a handsome boy with

curly hair and fine features. He was recruited into the revolutionary group by Satyendranath Bose, and soon became the most active political worker in the town of Midnapur. He was arrested, but finally acquitted, for distributing to the people the revolutionary pamphlet *Sonar Bangla*. For party funds he even committed a political robbery by snatching away the mail-bag of a postal runner at Hatgachia near his ancestral home. On an evening in the third week of April, 1908 Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram entrained for Muzaffarpore on their dangerous mission. Prafulla had a revolver with him. Khudiram carried with him two revolvers, and a bag containing a powerful bomb prepared jointly by Hem Chandra Das and Ullaskar Dutt. One cannot but note regretfully that two young men in their teens were sent to far away Muzaffarpore on a fearful mission unchaperoned and without the benefit of a senior guide, and left to fend for themselves. This was not responsible or thoughtful leadership.

Reaching Muzaffarpore at the end of the third week of April, 1908., the two young revolutionaries showed considerable intelligence and resourcefulness. They secured with the help of a local gentleman shelter for themselves in a Dharamsala (Pilgrims rest house). Through the help of the same gentleman they secured additional funds for themselves for, it seems, the Calcutta leaders had not cared to furnish them with adequate money, even while sending them on a job which would cost them their precious lives. Prafulla and Khudiram carefully watched the places of resort, and the residence of Kingsford, his daily routine and movements. Kingsford went to court in the morning, and returned home in the afternoon. On evenings he would go to the Town club for a game or cards.

At about 8 P.M. on the 30th April, 1908 Prafulla and Khudiram awaited their victim under the shadow of a big

tree in front of Kingsfords' residence. At about 8-30 P.M. what appeared to them as kingsfords' carriage drew near the gate of his house. Khudiram ran forward and hurled the bomb at the carriage. The vehicle was shattered to splinters. That carriage was not kingsford's but that of a local lawyer, Mr. Kennedy. In the carriage were Mrs and Miss Kennedy. Mr. and Mrs Kingsford's carriage, which looked very much like that of the Kennedys, was coming behind. Fatally injured, Miss Kennedy died within a few minutes of the explosion, and Mrs Kennedy a little later. Nothing succeeds like success is a common saying. When one contemplates this tragic incident at Muzaffarpore one is inclined to remark nothing fails like failure. The two young revolutionaries carried out their mission remarkably well. The mistake about the identity of the carriage at night on an ill-lit road of a mofussil town was due more to extraordinary circumstantial factors than any remissness on their part.

Still what a horrible difference did that make? Instead of the hated kingsford two innocent ladies lay dead!

Prafulla and Khudiram were strangers in Bihar. The week they stayed there before the incident was spent in the town of Muzaffarpore keeping watch on Kingsford. They had no idea of the topography of the area. There was none to whom they could turn for help or guidance. They were left to depend wholly on their own wits-wits of two lads in their teens. In Calcutta they had been supplied with only a railway map. Hence, they could proceed only along railway tracks, and this, as we will see, helped the police to apprehend them quickly and easily.

After hurling the bomb the two ran together for some distance, and then parted company, each heading for the railway line at different directions. Prafulla reached Samastipur station on the Bengal and North Western Railway, and got into an inter class compartment of a train with a ticket

for Mokameh Ghat. At Samastipnr Sub-inspector of police Nanda Lal Benerjee entered the same compartment. He was also coming from Muzaffarpore on the expiry of his leave. He had not yet rejoined after leave, and was not on duty. Immediately after the incident the police by beat of drum announced that rewards would be paid to those who could apprehend the culprits of the bomb outrage, or give any information about them. All quarters were alerted. The District Superintendent of Police sent two Sub-inspectors with large contingents of constables down the railway line, one to Bankipore another to Mokameh Ghat with instructions to post constables at each station along the route, and to arrest all suspicious persons. Two constables were, thus, posted at the Waini railway station.

Before entraining at Samastipur Prafulla had changed his clothes, and wore new clothes and shoes. But he had walked a long distance without food and sleep. His distraught look excited the suspicion of Sub-inspector Nanda Lal Banerjee, and the latter tried to be friendly with Prafulla. Nanda Lal, however, managed to get down at a way side station, and wire the District Magistrate of Muzaffarpore for permission to arrest the suspicious looking Bengali youth. When the train reached Mokameh Ghat station Nanda Lal received a message directing him to arrest the suspected person. Prafulla purchased a ticket for Howrah at Mokameh Ghat. As he was about to board the Howrah bound train, Prafulla was arrested by the constables on duty at the platform under orders of Nanda Lal. Prafulla wrenched himself free from his captors and began to run. But he was soon overtaken and overpowered. Prafulla even fired a shot at one of the constables, but missed in his excitement. As Prafulla was determined not to fall into the clutches of the police, he fired two shots into his own brain and expired instantaneously.

Thus perished on the evening or 1st May, 1908 the first

revolutionary martyr of Bengal-Prafulla Chandra Chaki through the unholy zeal to serve his foreign masters of another Bengali, Nanda Lal Benerjee. One should not forget the hard and unpleasant fact that if Bengal produced a galaxy of heroic revolutionary martyrs, she also furnished to the British Imperial Government some of the vilest and most venomous members of the British Indian Police. Khudiram Bose, after his arrest on the same day identified the dead body of Prafulla as that of his accomplice Dinesh Chandra Roy, the name by which he knew Prafulla Chaki. The police cut off the head of Prafulla, and took it down to Calcutta preserved in spirit for further identification.

Khudiram also on his part, made a dash for the railway line with a view to entraiging for Howrah from some station. On the morning of 1st may, 1908 at about 8 A.M. hs reached Waini Station. He had traversed Twenty four miles from Muzaffarpore during the night bare-footed, and was thoroughly exhausted, hungry, and thirsty. He purchased fried rice from the bazar by the side of the station and ate it, Immediately after he was accosted, overpowered, and arrested by the two constables on duty at the Waini station. At the time of his arrest Khudiram had in his possession two revolvers, 37 rounds of ammunition, an Indian railway map, cuttings from a local time table, and a sum of rupees thirty in notes and coins.

The words and demeanour of Khudiram at the time of his arrest, at the time of his statement before the Magistaate, during his trial in court, at the moment when the verdict or death was passed on him, and finally when he mounted the gallows were simple, straight forward, quiet, gentle, and even cheerful. He unmistakably gave the impression to all concerned that it was a joy for him to die for his country. Not without reason did his trial and execution evoke such deep emotions in the hearts of his countrymen, not without reason

is his dear memory so fondly cherished in every Bengali home.

In his statement before the Magistrate he said he had intended to kill kingsrord. He had thrown the bomb at the carriage believing that kingsrord was in it, and not two innocent unfortunate ladies.

The Muzaffarpore Bomb case started before the trying Magistrate on May 21, 1908, and Khudiram was committed to the sessions on May 25. The sessions trial lasted from June 8 to June 13, 1908. The simple-hearted unsophisticated country-lad from Midnapur pleaded guilty to the charges brought against him. What is the use or telling lies when one is ready to face death for one's action ? On the last day of the trial, June 13, 1908 the sentence of death was passed on him. When the the judge inquired of him if he had understood the implication of the sentence passed on him, Khudiram simply smiled a little and nodded.

An appeal was filed on Khudiram's behalf in the High Court. But the High Court confirmed the sentences of death on July 13, 1908.

At 6 A.M. on the 11th August, 1908 Khudiram Bose of Midnapur walked to the gallows erected in the Muzaffarpore Central Jail calm, quiet, and cheerful as ever. All through this tragic drama Khudiram had uttered no heroics, betrayed no excitement or bravado. He remained cool, aloof, unperturbed, unruffled, and unconcerned. Khudiram's political Guru (mentor) another martyr from Midnapur, shahid Satyendranath Bose-had once asked him, "can you give your life for the country?" Khudiram had at once replied-yes. He did give his life for his country, but never gave any indication that in so doing he was performing a noble, heroic, or extraordinary deed. He was simply redeeming the pledge given to Satyendranath. He was really glad he was making good his promise. Soon the Mentor or Guru himself was to follow his

follower to the gallows. The only last wish he had expressed was to see his dear Midnapur once.

The repercussions and consequences of the bomb explosion at Muzaffarpore, and the martyrdom of Khudiram Bose were widespread and far reaching. No act of the British against an individual Indian, since the judicial murder of Maharaja Nanda Kumar, agitated the public mind so intensely as the execution of Khudiram.

The intelligence Branch of the Police had been for sometime keeping a close watch on the Muraripukur Garden, and other resorts of the revolutionaries. They were also shadowing the movements of the more important and active members of the group.

On receiving information about the Muzaffarpore bomb explosion the top police officers met in a conference on the 1st May, 1908. They decided to carry out simultaneous searches and raids in the houses occupied by revolutionaries of Aurobindo group in their two principal centres Calcutta, and the town of Midnapur. Of course, all revolutionaries found at the premises raided by the police were to be rounded up. These police raids continued for two or three days starting from the dawn of May 2, 1908.

On the 2nd May, 1908 were arrested the following revolutionaries from several places in Calcutta.

Muraripukur Garden :

The biggest haul was in the Muraripukur garden where fourteen revolutionaries were arrested, and arms, ammunition and a large amount of revolutionary literature, letters, and documents were seized. Those arrested were 1. Barindra Kumar Ghosh, 2. Bibhuti Bhusan Sarkar, 3. Upendranath Bandopadhyay, 4. Indu Bhusan Roy, 5. Ullaskar Dutt, 6. Nalini Kanta Gupta, 7. Paresh Chandra Manilk, 8. Bijoy Kumar Nag, 9. Sacindra Kumar Sen, 10. Sisir Kumar Ghosh, 11. Narendranath Buxi.

12. Kunjalal Saha, 13. Purna Chandra Sen, 14. Hemen-dranath Ghosh. Articles seized by the police were :

Machinery for casting shells of bombs ; six or seven revolvers ; guns and rifles ; sticks of dynamite ; electric battery and fuse ; two English publications on the preparation of explosives, a long lithographed manuscript dealing with the method of preparing bombs and their employment ; Rules for forming secret revolutionary societies ; and sundry publications, notebooks, correspondence and papers.

At 134 Harrison Road were arrested two Kaviraj brothers —1. Nagendrt Nath Gupta, 2. Dharani Nath Gupta, and 3. Ashok Nandy. A few boxes containing bombs, and machines and materials for making explosives were found and seized by the police here. These were carried by Ullaskar Dutta from 15, Gopi mohan Dutt Lane, where Hem Chandra Das used to prepare bombs and explosives, and dumped into that house. Apart from these two sites, the police could discover nothing of significance in the other places searched by them in Calcutta. At 15 Gopi Mohan Dutt Lane were arrested 1. Kanailal Dutt, and 2. Nirapada, alias Nirmal Roy.

At 8, Grey Street were arrested 1) Sri Aurobinda Ghosh, 2) Abinash Chandra Bhattacharya, and 3) Sailendra Nath Bose.

At 38/4 Raja Naba Kissen Street was arrested. 1. Hem Chandra Das.

At early dawn on the 3rd of May, 1908 several houses were searched by the police in the town of Midnapur, the most important centre, after Calcutta, of the Jugantar group of revolutionaries. From Midnapur, we should remember, came shahid (martyr) Khudiram Bose, Shahid (martyr) Satyendranath Bose, and Hem Chandra Das (Kanungo). I) At the house of the two brothers—Janendranath Bose, and Satyendranath Bose the police found a gun (for which Janendranath Bose had license), two kukris. (short daggers used by Nepalis), a chopper, 14 lathis (long bamboo sticks), and some

revolutionary literature. Both the brothers were arrested by the police. 2) At the house of the local lawyer, Upendranath Ghosh were seized two swords and a bayonet. Jog Jiban Ghosh, youngest son of Upendranath Ghosh was arrested. 3) At the house of Sarat Chandra De the police found a sword and arrested him. 4) The house of Pyari Mohon Das was searched for his son, Santosh Kumar Das. But nothing was found there and no arrest made, as also in the houses of two other lawyees, Pyari Lal Ghosh, and Sital Chandra Mukhopadhyay.

Out of these searches and arrests the Government later built up the celebrated Alipore Bomb conspiracy case (Emperor Vs Barindra Kumar Ghosh and others), and its less important twin, Midnapur Bomb conspiracy case (Emperor Vs Jog Jiban Ghosh, and others).

Before taking up the story of those two conspiracy cases, with the close of which virtually ended the first round of armed struggle in Bengal, sponsored and led by Sri Aurobinda Ghosh, let us touch on a few other significant events.

The foremost among the extremist national leaders of the time was undoubtedly Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. His own temper and temperament, and his duty as the leader of the people made the Lion of Poona roar out in his characteristic fearless and forthright manner over the Muzaffarpore explosion and the role of Khudiram and Prafulla in it. In a series of terse and trenchant articles in the *Kesari* he expressed his views on these developments, and the repressive measures promulgated by the Government to deal with them.

Lokmanya Tilak was arrested in Bombay on June 24, 1908 on a charge of preaching sedition through his article in the *Kesari* of the 12th May, 1908 entitled. "The country's Misfortune".

In that article Lokmanya had the courage to say that Prafulla and Khudiram were not inspired by any selfish desire for gain or glory. They were goaded by the injustice and repression of British rulers into such desperate action. He then

went on to say, "The desire of the people gradually to obtain the rights of Swarajya is growing stronger and stronger, and if they do not get rights by degrees, as desired by them, then some people, at least, out of the subject population being filled with indignation or exasperation will not fail to embark upon the commission of improper horrible deeds recklessly.

"If rulers do not want them they should impose restrictions upon their own system of administration."

"All thoughtful people seem to have formed one opinion that the bomb party has come into existence in consequence of the oppression practised by the official class, the harrassment inflicted by them and their obstinacy in treating public opinion with recklessness. The boms exploded owing to the official class having tried the patience of the Bengalees to such a degree that the heads of the Bengali youths become turned. The responsibility of this calamity must, therefore, be thrown not on the political agitation, writings and speeches, but on the thoughtlessness and obstinacy of the official class."

Later, after his arrest, one more article, entitled "These Remendies are not Lasting" appearing in the Kesari on the 9th June, 1908, was made the ground of another charge of sedition against Tilak, The day before, that is on the 8th June, 1908 were placed on the Statute Book two repressive measures- The explosive substances Act, and the Newspaper (Incitement to offences) Act ordaining Draconian punishments.

In the article headed, "These Remedies are not Lasting" Tilak wrote :

"The English have evidently emasculated a whole nation and reduced it to a state of impotence simply to enable the lowest of their officials to exercise their high handed sway with impunity.

He concluded, "The real and lasting means of stopping the bomb outrage consists in making a beginning to grant the important rights of Swarajya to the people. It is not possible for measures of repression to have a lasting effect in the present

condition of Western sciences and that of the people of India."

The trial of Tilak was held in the court of Mr. Justice Davar of the Bombay High Court with a jury consisting of 7 Europeans and 2 Indians. Tilak conducted his own defence. In a marathon address to the jury which took twenty one hours spread over five days Tilak made a historic defence of the freedom of the Indian press. It also preached the gospel of freedom to those who sought to break the shackles of foreign rule. When the jury announced a verdict of guilty, Tilak rose and uttered these noble and memorable words :

All that I wish to say is this that inspite of the verdict of the jury I still maintain I am innocent. There are higher powers that rule the destinies of men and nations and I think that it may be the will of Providence that the cause I represent may be benefitted more by my suffering than by my pen and tongue."

The savage sentence of transportation for six years was passed on Lokmanya Tilak on July 22, 1908, after holding him guilty on two counts. It is an eternal shame to all Indians that the judge who imposed such a monstrous sentence on Lokmanya Tilak was an Indian Parsi. After a brief stay in Ahmedabad Jail Tilak was transported to Mandalay Jail in Burma.

Bombay city observed complete strike for six days one for every of Tilak's sentence as a protest against the incarceration of their beloved and revered leader. Life was paralysed in the city. Most of the mills could not function as the workers stayed away. In some places angry crowds of mill hands threw stones at the police, and indulged in other acts of rowdyism. Markets and shops closed spontaneously. In course of quelling the disturbances in the city police and military shot dead thirty persons and wounded a hundred more India had never witnessed before such a spectacle of spontaneous mass demonstration against the Government. Lenin characterised these strikes and riots in Bombay as the first stirrings of the revolutionary mass movement in India. Sri Aurobinda Ghosh, an

ardent and admiring political disciple of the Lokmanya paid a glowing tribute to his leader on the occasion :

“Tilak, wherever you may go, let your body perish with the canker of your bandage, the fire you have kindled in our hearts shall never be extinguished.”

Let us now resume the story of revolutionary operations in Bengal. As long as Sri Aurobinda was in the leadership the targets of these revolutionary attacks were marked down British high officials, and one French dignitary. (the Mayor of Chandernagore). But after his arrest, these assaults began to be directed against obnoxious Indians than against Britishers. Most of these later incidents related either to the Muzaffarpore bomb explosion, or to the Alipore Bomb conspiracy case.

Between June and December, 1908 bombs were hurled from suburban stations like Kakinara, Shyamnagar, and Sodepur at Europeans travelling in railway compartments. Almost all these attempts were infructuous. Only one European was seriously injured. A series of unsuccessful attempts were made on the Government prosecutor in the Alipore Bomb case, Mr Hume. On the 15th May, 1908 a bomb was hurled into his carriage when he was driving through Grey street. The second attempt on him was made at the Howrah railway station, when several bombs were hurled into his compartment. But Mr Hume escaped. Two more abortive attempts followed, one on the 10th February, and the last on the 5th April, 1909. Sub-inspector Nandalal Banerjee's turn came on the 9th November, 1908. Nandalal, then on leave, had shown considerable shrewdness and alacrity in detecting Prafulla Chaki and goading him to self-immolation. He was duly awarded rupees one thousand for his loyal enthusiasm by his British masters. Now he was to receive his desert at the hands of Prafulla Chakis, comrade-in-arms, Nandalal, on a visit to Calcutta, was staying at a relative's house in Serpentine Lane. On the evening of November 9, 1908 he came out of the house to go to the Post-office to drop a letter. He had proceeded a little distance on the

road when he was fired upon and, struck with four bullets. He died instantaneously. His assailants escaped in the dark, and the police could never trace them out. Another prominent and loyal agent of the British Government was Ashutosh Biswas the Public Prosecutor of Alipore. He had been most assiduous and unduly zealous in securing the conviction of political workers hauled up before the courts.

At about 4 P.M. on 10th February, 1909, when Ashutosh Biswas came out of the court of the Suburban Police Magistrate he was shot from behind and expired. The assailant, Charu Chandra Basu, was overpowered by the constables on duty and arrested. Even among revolutionary heroes and martyrs Charu Chandra Basu is an extraordinary figure. He was a short, sickly, slender boy in his teens. He was, moreover, a cripple who was bereft of the palm and fingers of the right hand from birth. He held a humble job in a printing press. He had fired three shots at his victim by pulling the Trigger by his left hand, the revolver being tightly tied to his crippled right hand. The police employed infernal methods of torture on this sickly boy to extract information and confession from him. But he only gave out false scents to the police. He treated the proceedings in the court, and the capital sentence inflicted on him with utmost unconcern, and showed he was fully prepared to die on the gallows in the cause of his motherland. Charu Chandra Basu was hanged in the Alipore Central Jail on the 19th March 1909. He walked to the scaffold with his usual demeanour of utter indifference. What cool, quiet and magnificent heroism !

When the High Court Appeals relating to the Alipore Bomb Conspiracy case were in their penultimate stage, a fresh incident occurred. Shamsul Alam, a Deputy Superintendent of Police, notorious for his extreme zeal in building up prosecution against politicals, was, shot dead on the afternoon of the 24th January, 1910 in the High Court premises. His assailant, Birendra Nat Dutta-Gupta a young man in his teens was appre-

hended immediately after the murder. He was sentenced to death and was executed on February 21, 1910.

On the basis of the police searches and raids conducted in Calcutta and the town of Midnapur the Government framed the twin Alipore Bomb Conspiracy case, and the Midnapur Bomb conspiracy case. The object of the conspiracies was alleged to be waging war against the king-Emperor.

In prestige and celebrity the former case far outdistances the latter. But the Midnapur Bomb Conspiracy case is a most significant and interesting study. It reveals gruesomely the satanic methods and machinations of the British administration and the vile and venal activities of the British Indian police in prosecuting and persecuting political suspects and people in general.

The villain of the Midnapur Bomb Conspiracy case was Moulavi Mazharul Huq, the Deputy Superintendent of Police. He was the same man who had concocted the false case against the poor innocent Nagpuri coolies in connexion with the Narayangarh train-wrecking attempt in order to grab the prize-money declared by the Government, and the Bengal Nagpur Railway. Mazharul Huq was actively encouraged aided, and abetted in his nefarious Venture by Mr. Donald Weston I.C.S., the District Magistrate of Midnapur, and other British officials stationed there.

As an immediate consequence of the police searches in the Town of Midnapur on the 3rd May, 1908, referred to before, Satyendranath Bose, Jog Jiban Ghosh, and Sarat Chandra De were prosecuted under the Arms Act. Satyendra was Charged with the offence of going about the streets of Midnapur with he gun licensed under the name of his brother Janendranath Bose. The charge against Jog Jiban and Sarat was possession of swords, and roaming about in the streets of Midnapur, sword in hand. All the three were convicted—Satyendra to two months rigorous imprisonment, and Jog Jiban and Sarat Chandra to one month's.

But this small beer could not allay the vengeful ire of the British authorities against the revolutionary Youth, and townsmen of Midnapur. The revolutionary importance of the town of Midnapur in those days will be evident from the facts that two of the first four martyrs of Bengal—Khudiram Bose, and Satyendranath Bose belonged to Midnapur, the only foreign-trained explosive expert of the revolutionary group—Hem Chandra Das—came from Midnapur. Purna Chandra Sen arrested at Muraripukur Garden came from Midnapur. All classes and sections of the inhabitants of Midnapur town had most vigorously and zealously participated in the Swadeshi and Boycott movement. The British authorities were, therefore, determined to teach a lesson to the town of Midnapur. They decided that their modus operandi for achieving this vendetta would be to frame a conspiracy case, and net in the ringleaders among the anti-Government agitators and activists.

The first move of the police was to search a large number of houses in the town on the 8th July, 1908. In the house of Pyari Mohan Das in an outer room the police discovered a round ball among a lot of debris. The police alleged it was a bomb. It was really a cracker which the police had managed to plant there through an open window. Santosh Kumar Das, son of Pyari Mohan Das was arrested. The District Magistrate Donald Weston and Mazharul Haq had fixed on Sontosh Kumar Das to be utilized by them as their tool in the contemplated conspiracy case. Pyari Mohan Das was a retired Sub-registrar Sontosh Kumar Das had been a most active political worker, but had subsequently joined the police training camp at Ranchi to be recruited as a police sub-inspector. The pivot of the prosecution in a conspiracy case is the approver or approvers. The well-known police procedure in this regard was to induce one of the accused to confess about the guilt of himself, implicating in his confession his fellow accused. Often the accused was forced to write out a statement dictated by the police and sign it as his own confession. The police technique

in constraining an accused to confess was double-edged-blandishments and brutal torture. The accused was, ofcourse, told he would be released if he confessed and helped the prosecution, Additional baits and temptations were also held out to him. He would be sent abroad afterwards at Government expense, or would be provided with a decent highsalaried job. If such persuasions failed the police had recourse to the alternative of inflicting inhuman torture on the accused to force him to confess. The next step was to force the confessing accused to depose for the prosecution. If he agreed he would then become an approver. He would be produced before a magistrate or court, and granted what was known as king's pardon, that is, immunity from penalty for the crime he might have committed as a quid proquo for his agreeing to help the prosecution by being a witness for the Crown. The deposition of an approver in all cases was simply a repetition before the court of the story he had been tutored to tell by the police.

Santosh Kumar Das was arrested at early dawn of 8th July, 1908. That very evening Deputy Superintendent of Police, Moulavi Mazharul Huq saw Santosh's mother, Shrimati Basanta Kumari and told her she must see Santosh in the Thana (Police Station) immediately and tell him to do whatever the Moulavi asked him to do, otherwise the Government will forfeit their property, and arrest his old father and two brothers. Santosh himself would, ofcourse, go to transportation. The old lady saw Santosh in a police officer's quarters near the Kotwali Police station and conveyed to him what the Moulavi had told her. Santosh only replied she should not have come there. While Moulavi Mazharul Huq was tackling the mother, Donald Weston, the District Magistrate took on the father, Peary Mohan Das. Repeatedly he summoned Pyari Mohan to his bungalow and told him to persuade his son to act as advised by the police, and then pray for king's pardon. But Santosh proved a hard nut to crack.

Santosh's recalcitrance infuriated Weston and in order to

show that he was not holding out empty threats he committed a brutal and savage act. Weston suddenly ordered the arrest of the old, infirm and almost blind Pyari Mohan Das. On the 23rd July, 1908 Pyari Mohan Das was arrested in the court before the very eyes of the weeping son, Santosh. For almost a week inhuman torture was inflicted on the old and sick Pyari Mohan in the hajat right in front of his son, Santosh unable to bear any more the suffering of his father, at last wrote out and signed a confessional statement dictated by the police on the 29th July, 1908. The police then turned their attention to Surendranath Mukherjee, the priest of the Hanumanji Temple in Mirbazar. Prolonged torture on Surendra at last broke him down and he recorded a confession dictated to him by the police on the 15th August, 1908.

The recording of Santosh's confession before a Magistrate on the 29th July encouraged Donald Weston and Mazhamul Huq to conduct a search on the 31st July, 1908, in the house of late Gangaram Dutt, a rich Zemindar and businessman of the Town. From the huge record-room of the house was discovered another so-called bomb, previously placed there by the police. A number of people, including the two grandsons of Gangaram Dutta were arrested in this connexion.

Surendranath Mukhopadhyay's confession on the 15th August, 1908 made Donald Weston and Mazharul Huq feel greatly reassured and emboldened. They now proceeded to net in their biggest and richest prey, a pucca titled Raja. On the 28th and 29th August, 1908 were searched the Gope palace, the Estate House at Colonelgola, and garden house at Abasgarh in the Town of Midnapur, and the palace at Narajole of Raja Narendra Lal Khan. The Raja of Narajole was arrested and taken to the Midnapur central Jail.

The fiendish machinations of Weston-Moulavi axis suffered their first jolt on the 31st August, 1908 when both Santosh and Surendra retracted in court their confessions.

On the 7th September, 1908 Moulavi Mazharul Huq filed

the First Information Report incriminating 154 (one hundred and fifty-four) residents of the Town. The allegation was that these persons had met and conspired at 23 different places in the town and its suburbs to prepare and procure bombs with which Mr. Donald Weston, the District Magistrate was to be killed. The First Information Report was being filed under Sections 4, 5, and 6 of the Indian Explosive Act, 1908.

Who were these 154 persons ? They included 28 important zemindars of Midnapur, headed by Raja Narendra Lal Khan of Narajole ; 17 leading lawyers of the town, headed by Upendranath Maity, leader of the Midnapur Bar, and including Jog Jiban's father, Upendranath Ghosh ; 6 medical practitioners of the Town ; 20 prominent merchants ; and 28 students, who had taken leading roles in the Swadeshi movement, or were the leaders of the local gymnasiums. Among others who figured on the Moulavi's list were the redoubtable editor of Medini-Bandhab Devdas Karan, the revolutionaries leader, Janerdranath Bose, who was a teacher in Midnapur Collegiate School, and a Muslim music-maestro Tasadduq Khan.

The sites of conspiratorial meets, mentioned in the F. I. R. were no less variegated and breath-taking. These included the local Estate offices of the Maharja of Mayurbhanj, (a Native State) and the Raja of Mahishadal-the biggest zemindar of Midnapur district ; the ancestral house of B. Dey, I. C. S. ; and the houses of two public women of the town kamini and Rajbala.

The big zemindars and rich merchants of the town were lugged in by the police simply with a view to mulcting blackmail money out of them.

Actually, however, not more than thirty persons were arrested with only 27 accused, including one absconding. The stratagem of Weston-Moulavi axis to set up an approver having failed, the mainstay of the prosecution was a document marked Exhibit 56. This purported to be a compilation based on the day-to-day report of police informer-Rakhal Chandra Laha.

Among the 27 accused standing trial were such persons as Raja Narendra Lal Khan, Upendranath Maity, and a few young associates of martyr khudiram Bose, and martyr Satyendra nath Bose, like Jog Jiban Ghosh, Santosh Kumar Das, and Surendra nath Mukhopadhyay.

The 4th of November, 1908 saw the sensational and dramatic collapse of the case so sedulously fabricated by Donald Weston and Moulavi Mazharul Huq. The renowned Advocate-General of Bengal, S. P. Sinha (afterwards Baron Sinha of Raipur) had come down from Calcutta to take charge of the prosecution from that day. The king pin of the prosecution, Rakhal Chandra Laha was put into the witness-box. But Rakhal threw a veitable bomb-shell in the court-room. He deposed as follows—

One night, when he was returning from the house of Abinash Chandra Mitra (a local zemindar and an accused in the case) he was arrested by the police for disorderly conduct in a public place, while drunk. He was taken to the police station and mercilessly tortured there. On his praying to be spared he was told by the police that if he agreed to do and say what the police asked him to, he would be richly rewarded, otherwise he would be sent to jail. In self-defence against the ferocious conduct of the police, and also in the expectation of getting reward from the police, he agreed to act as dictated by them.

Then he began to be Tutored by the police as to what he was to tell about this case. What I was to say about each days events used to be written down on a slip, and after making me drink, and holding out other Temptations they would induce me to sign it.

In this way he was tutored many things concerning the activities of the accused, and about many meetings and conferences with a view to repeating them before the court. The accounts of certain events were recorded in separate slips of paper and he was asked to get them by heart. He was given lots of money, and he was told that the Gope palace of the

Raja of Narajole would be presented to him as a reward.

But, at last, he was seized with remorse. He realised that due to his action many innocent and respectable gentlemen of the town were suffering and could be sent to jail. Then he resolved to tell the truth in court. What he was now stating before the court was the truth. Rakhal also stated that he had noted at the very bottom of the report that whatever he had stated in his signed report were all incorrect.

Rakhal Chandra Laha's written report (Exhibit—56) was examined in court, and it was found that he had really noted at the bottom of the report-Exhibit 56—the words "All these are false".

The eminent Advocate-General was simply flabbergasted by this evidence of the principal witness for the prosecution and prayed for adjournment of the case till the 9th November for settling his further course of action. On the 9th November, 1908 Advocate-general S. P. Sinha withdrew the case against 24 of the accused for want of evidence.

The case proceeded against the three remaining accused—Jog Jiban Ghosh, Santosh Kumar Das, and Surendranath Mukhopadhyay before the joint Magistrate, Mr C. H. Reed. On the 30th November, 1908 the Magistrate committed all the three accused to the Sessions.

The sessions trial began on the 20th December, 1908 before the Sessions Judge, Mr. Smithers. On the 30th January, 1908 the sessions judge found all the accused guilty. He sentenced Jog Jiban and Santosh to ten years transportation, and Surendra to seven years transportation. They appealed to the High Court against the sentences.

Almost all the contemporary luminaries of the High Court Criminal Bar appeared on behalf of the appellants. Jog Jiban was defended by the renowned Advocate Dasarathi Sanyal and several others; the leading lawyer on behalf of Santosh was Sir Ashutosh Chowdhury. Among Surendra's defenders was Manmatha Nath Mukhopadhyay (afterwards the famous Justice) Manmatha Nath Mukhopadhyay.

The appeal was heard by Chief Justice Sir Lawrence Jenkins.

and justice Ashutosh Mukhopadhyay. The illustrious Chief Justice delivered his historic judgement on the 1st June, 1909 acquitting all the three accused. The judgement of the chief Justice Sir Lawrence Jenkins was illuminating and momentous in several respects. His observations on Exhibit 56 are an emphatic castigation of the Government and police for fabricating a false prosecution against political suspects. He commented.

"Exhibit 56 cannot be admitted as evidence against the accused. The only thing that comes out of this document is the knowledge how the Government got up this case ; it is the foundation on which the prosecution built up their case. If this document has any value that does not go in favour of the prosecution. It destroys their case".

The learned Chief Justice held that the confessions of Santosh and Shurendra were not voluntary and could not be treated as evidence even against them.

The chief justice laid bare the shameless activities and proceedings of the District Magistrate Donald Weston and the police in compelling Santosh to record his so-called confession-really stating what the police had previously dictated to him. He referred to Mazharul Huq's seeing Santosh's mother, holding out threats to her, and telling her to persuade Santosh to confess and turn an approver. He referred to Donald Weston's sending for Pyari Mohan Das, father of Santosh, and telling Pyari to ask Santosh to confess, and become a witness for the crown. Referring to the actual arrest of Pyari Mohan Das in the court on the 23rd July, 1908 before the very eyes of his son, Santosh, the eminent Chief Justice queried :

"But why was Pyari Mohan arrested ? He had not been arrested on the 8th of July when the bomb was discovered in his house. The Chief Justice recorded that Weston had admitted that he was responsible for the arrest of Pyari Mohan, he had advised the police to arrest him. The great Chief Justice remarked :

"What else, but putting pressure on Santosh could have been the reason for arresting Pyari Mohan?"

The Midnapur Bomb conspiracy case had two important offshoots. On the 4th of November, 1908 Rakhal Chandra Laha-drunkard, paid informer of the police did what was for him a miraculous feat—a performance no less striking than brigand Ratnakar's turning into the poet of the Ramayan. But poor Rakhal Chandra Laha had to pay dearly for his noble act of faith. The fury of the frustrated authorities fell on him. He was prosecuted for Perjury—giving false evidence. Mr. Forrester, Sessions. Judge of Midnapur convicted him and passed on him a vindictive sentence of five years rigorous imprisonment, and a fine of rupees three thousand. On appeal the High Court remitted the fine and reduced the imprisonment to three years. Against his will Rakhal had been dragged into a nasty conundrum. He rose to noble height, and extricated himself from the vicious web. For that he had to rot in durance vile, while the two real rascals involved in the Dirty crime—Weston and Mazharul Huq got promotions in their official careers.

The second was Pyari Mohan Das's Damage suit against Donald Westan for harrassing and humiliating him.

We now came to the far—famed Alipore Bomb conspiracy case—which ranks as one of the most notable political trials held during the British regime in India. As the trial proceeded, and even before it had started certain dramatic developments occurred.

We have seen, in all, twenty-three persons were arrested after police searches at several places in Calcutta on the 2nd May, 1908. A strange and bewildering spectacle was witnessed at the time of the police raid in the Muraripukur Garden. Barindra Kumar Ghosh Dramatically announced before the police party, "my mission is over", and started "making a clean breast" before the police of what they had done and what they had intended to do. He volunteered to point out to the police

the spots where the arms and ammunition were dug into, and where the papers and documents of the revolutionary secret society were kept. Barindra Kumar also babbled before the police about their activities. Observing the strictest secrecy about the affairs of the society is one of the cardinal rules of the code of conduct universally accepted by all secret societies all the world over. Even Barindra Kumar himself only a week before as a revolutionary leader had insisted on maintaining the strictest secrecy while sending Khudiram and Prafulla to Muzaffarpore.

He had ensured that Khudiram should not be allowed to know the real identity and real name of Prafulla Chaki, but should know him as Dinesh Chandra Roy. Similarly, Prafulla Chaki should be told that Khudiram's name was Durgadas Sen. Such stringent secrecy must be enforced between two revolutionary comrades proceeding on a joint perilous mission. But when the police party arrived at the Muraripukur Garden only a week after, the revolutionary leader completely threw overboard the canon about secrecy and became absolutely open-hearted before the arch-enemies of the entire revolutionary group. Such contradictory conduct is utterly incomprehensible. Decency and decorum demand that certain things be better left unsaid. But one has to mention a very painful and unpleasant fact as that might furnish a clue to the understanding of the sudden, unpredictable, and inexplicable twists in the life and conduct of not only Barindra Kumar Ghosh, but also of his far more illustrious brother, Sri Aurobinda Ghosh. Their mother, as also her two sisters were of unsound mind. The two brothers came out of the womb of a person who was very much unbalanced mentally.

Barindra Kumar Ghosh next followed up his "making clean breast of everything" craze by giving a full and detailed confession to the police. Upendra Nath Banerjee, Ullaskar Dutt, and later on Hrishikesh Kanjilal also followed Barindra Kumar's example and implicated other revolutionaries in their

statements to the police. Subsequently, they even repeated their confessions before the trying Magistrate Mr. Barley.

As a result of these confessions and of information obtained from papers and documents seized at the Muraripukur Garden the police traced out and arrested the following nine persons in the second batch.

1. Narendranath Gossain, 2. Hrishidesh Kanjilal, 3. Sudhir Kumar Sarkar of Khulna, 4. Birendranath Ghosh of Jessore, 5. Krishna Jiban Sanyal of Malda, 6. Balkrishna Hari Kane of Nagpur, and three brothers from Sylhet—7. Hem Chandra Sen, 8. Birendra Chandra Sen, and 9. Sushil Kumar Sen.

It is needless to enter into speculations over the inner working of the mind, and motives of the confessing accused. Doubtless their motives were mixed—both noble and ignoble. Implicating other accomplices in one's confession is universally and rightly regarded as a sordid act of betrayal. When there is a spate of confessions among the accused in a conspiracy case, it inevitably leads to some of them turning an approver—that is, a witness for the prosecution against his co-accused in lieu of obtaining King's pardon for himself. It happened in this case also.

Among the persons arrested in the second batch was one Narendranath Goswami, or Gossain. This young man came from the well-known zamindar family of Serampore. As usual with young men of such families Narendra had led a wild and unsteady life. Whether he himself drifted into the revolutionary group, or was sent by some designing Government man is not clear. Naren Gossain soon succumbed to the threats and temptations held out to him by the police, and agreed to turn an approver. On the 23rd June, 1908 Narendra Goswami was produced in the court of the trying Magistrate, was granted King's pardon and went into the witness-box as a prosecution witness,

On the basis of statements made by Naren Gossain a third batch of nine persons were arrested by the police. They were : 1. Debabrata Basu, 2. Indranath Napdy, 3. Jatindra Nath Bandopadnay, 4. Pravas Chandra alias Manik Deb, 5. Bijoy Chandra Bhattacharya, 6. Nikhileswar Roy, 7. Charu Chandra Roy, Lecturer of Dupleix college (Chandannagare), 8. Hrishidas Das, and 9. Satyendra Nath Bose, who was brought to the old Alipore Jail (now known as Presidency Jail) from the Midnapur Central Jail, where he was undergoing a sentence of two months under the Arms Act.

Hem Chandra Das of Midnapur was the one stalwart among the accused, who was strongly apposed to giving confessions to the police. The arrival of Satyendranath Bose from Midnapur greatly strengthened his hands. The two Midnapur leaders took counsel together and decided that Narendra Goswami should be killed before he could do further harm. Indeed, Satyendra felt so keenly about it that he decided to take upon himself the task of murdering Naren Gossain in the Jaii.

To dispatch the hated approver Satyendra needed two things. He must have some weapon with which to kill Naren Goswami. Secondly he must have Gossain at close range.

Satyendra was sick and was lying most of the time in the jail hospital. There was some discussion among the accused in the Alipore jail concerning an attempt at jail-break by them. Comrades outside were asked to smuggle revolvers into the jail for this purpose. They were to be surreptitiously transferred during interview. Satyendra sent a request to Hem Chandra Das to send to him the first revolver that arrived in the jail. Accordingly, Hem Chandra sent a revolver to Satyendra in the hospital through young Kanailal Dutta of Chandernagore. Kanai, thus, came to know what was going on. He insisted on participating in the

noble act of removing traitor Naren from the earth. Kanai complained of severe colic and got into the hospital.

To bring Narendra Goswami to him Satyendra pretended that he also desired to be a fellow approver of his, and sent a message to him saying that he wanted to be coached in this matter by him. Naren Goswami was accordingly sent under escort from the European ward where he was kept to the hospital for talks with Satyan. This hapeneed twice.

Two different dates are mentioned by writers on the subject concerning the murder of Naren Gossain ; some say it happened on the 31st August, 1908, others state it was on the 1st of September, 1908 Let us accept the latter date in view of the fact that Hem Chandra Das who himself had played an important role in this drama mentions distinctly Monday, 1st September, 1908 as the date of this Occurrence in his Bengali work-Banglay Biplab Prachesta.

Satyen got information that Naren Goswami in his deposition in court on the 1st September would implicate several new and important persons in the conspiracy. So Satyendra and Kanailal resolved to finish Naren Gossain on the morning of the 1st of September.

Early in the morning Satyen asked for an interview with Naren Gossain. At about seven in morning Naren came to the hospital escorted by convict overseer, Higgins. They went upstairs to the dispensary room to meet Satyen. Kanailal Dutta also came over there. Higgins was left waiting in the dispensary, while Stayen Kanai and Naren went into the verandah for talks. Suddenly pistol shots rang out, and Naren Goswami, hurt in the hand, was heard, shouting "save me, save me, they will kill me". Higgins pushed Naren into the dispensary and grappled with kanai. Higgins was injured in the right palm by a bullet from Kanai's revolver. Naren now began to run downstairs. He was hotly pursued by kanai and Satyen who were firing at

their victim. Naren and Higgins ran down a passage. Another convict overseer, Linton came to their aid. Linton caught Satyen from behind and he fell to the ground. Linton then tackled kanai. Kanai Lal fired a last shot at Naren Gossain, who dropped down dead, and was finally overpowered by Linton.

After a brief trial the High Court awarded the capital sentence to both Kanai and Satyen on October 21, 1908.

Kanai Lal Dutt was born in his maternal uncle's place in Chandernagore. His ancestral home was at Serampore, but as his father, Chunilal Dutt was an Accountant in the Marine Department in Bombay Kanai Lal spent his boyhood in that city. Shrimati Brajeswari Devi was Kanai Lal's mother. Kanai Lal came back to Chandernagore and passed his Entrance and First Arts examinations from the Dupleix College. He appeared in B.A. with Honurs in History. When his success in that examination was published, he was prisoner in the Alipore jail, having been arrested from 15, Gopi Mohan Dutt Lane on the 2nd May, 1908, While a student in Dupleix College he came under the influence of professor Charu Roy and joined the revolutionary group. He was one of the young men who were learning from Hem Chandra Das how to prepare explosives. Kanai Lal first lived in a house at Bhownpore and then shifted to 15, Gopi Mohan Dutt Lane.

Satyendra nath Bose was the second son of Abhaya Charan Bose, younger brother of Rishi Rajnarain Bose, and his successor as Headmaster of the Midnapur, Collegiate School. He was born on the 30th July, 1882 in the house at Midnapur, which the grateful citizens of Midnapur had presented to Rishi Rajnarain in recognition of the latter's manifold activities for the improvement of the moral health and education of the town. Satyendra passed his Entrance in 1897 from the Midnapur Collegiate School, and his First

Arts in 1899 from the Midnapur College. He attended B.A. classes for some time in the City College, Calcutta, but had to discontinue his studies to attend to his sick mother, Shrimati Tarasundari Devi. Satyendra himself suffered from chronic asthma. Still he was the most active spirit of the revolutionary centre at Midnapur. He did stay for a short time in the Akhra at 102, Upper Circular Road, but had to go back to Midnapur as the atmosphere at the Akhra grew uncongenial for him.

Kanai Lal Dutt admitted his guilt and refused the aid of lawyers. After sentence he declined to send any mercy petition to the king Emperor. Kanai Lal Dutt heroically mounted the gallows on the morning of the 10th of November, 1908 in the Alipore Central Jail (the old one). Moti Lal Roy and other young men from Chandernagore organized a funeral procession with Kanai Lal's dead body. Milling crowds thronged both sides of the route from the jail gate to the Keoratala Burning Ghat in Kalighat, and showered flowers on the bier. After the cremation a huge crowd sought frantically to gather a pinch of the ashes of the dead hero.

Satyendra's execution was delayed for a few days in view of a mercy petition filed by his mother. He went to his death calm and serene on the morning of November 21, 1908. The demonstration over Kanai's dead body frightened the government, and Satyen was cremated in the jail compound.

All told forty-one persons had been arrested in three batches, and produced before the trying Magistrate, Mr Barley. The charge against the accused was one of conspiring to wage war against the king-Emperor. While the case was proceeding three of the accused departed from this earth-Narendra Nath Goswami, Kanai Lal Dutt, and Satyendranath Bose. Mr Barley committed all the remaining thirty-eight accused to the sessions in two batches—the first batch on August 19, 1908, and the second on 14th September, 1908.

The sessions trial commenced before Judge Beachcroft on the 19th October, 1908. Sri Aurobinda Ghosh was defended first, by the eminent counsel, Byomkesh Chakravorty, and later by Deshabandhu Chitta Ranjan Das, and other accused by less important lawyers.

At the opening of the sessions trial the defence lawyers argued that prosessor Charu Chandra Roy was a French citizen of Chandernagore, and all his alleged revolutionary activities had taken place on French territory and as such his trial was beyond the jurisdiction of the court. As to Jatindra Nath Banerjee, alias Niralamba Swami the defence lawyers argued that he had left the revolutionary groups long before the occurrence of the incidents coming within the purview of the alleged conspiracy. The Judge discharged the two accused, leaving thirty-six persons to stand the Sessions trial.

As the defence lawyers did not get the opportunity to cross-examine approver Narendra Nath Goswami the very damaging statements made by him against Sri Aurobinda and the other accused were not admissible evidence against them.

Deshabandhu Chittaranjan poured his whole soul into the defence of the illustrious accused. The peroration of his argument in defence of Sri Aurobinda is rightly quoted again and again as a classic of forensic eloquence.

“My appeal to you, therefore, is that a man like this, who is being charged with the offence with which he has been charged stands not only before the bar of this court, but before the Bar of the High Court of history. My appeal to you is this : that long after this controversy will be hushed in silence, long after this turmoil, this agitation will have ceased, long after he is dead and gone he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism, and a lover of humanity. Long after he is dead and gone his words will be

echoed and re-echoed not only in India, but across distant seas and lands. Therefore, I say that this man is standing not only before the bar of this court, but before the bar of the High court of History."

On May 6, 1909 Sessions Judge Beachcroft delivered his judgement. He convicted and sentenced the following nineteen persons.:

1. Barindra kumar Ghosh, and 2. Ullaskar Dutt—sentenced to be hanged; 3. Hem chandra Das, 4. Upendranath Bandopadhyay, 5. Bibhuti Sarkar, 6. Birendra Sen, 7. Sudhir Sarkar, 8. Indranath Nandy, 9. Abinash Chandra Bhattacharya, 10. Sailendra Bose, 11. Hrishi-kesh kanjilal, and 12. Indu Bhusan Roy—sentenced to transportation for life.
13. Paresh Maulik, 14. Sisir Ghosh, and 15. Nirapads Roy—sentenced to ten years transportation. 16. Ashok Nandy, 17. Balkrishna Hari kane, and 18. Sushil Sen—sentenced to seven years transportation. 19. Krishna Jiban Sanyal—sentenced to one year R. I.

The following seventeen persons were acquitted:—

1. Sri Aurobinda Ghosh, 2. Debabrata Basu, 3. Nalini kante Gupta, 4. Sachindra kumar Sen, 5. kunjalal Saha, 6. Bijoy kumar Nag. 7. Narendra (or Nagendra) kumar Buxi, 8. Purna Chandra Sen, 9. Hemendra Nath Ghosh, 10. Birendra Nath Ghosh, 11. Dharani Gupta, 12. Narendra Nath Gupta, 13. Hem Chandra Sen. 14. Nikhileswar Roy, 15. Hrishidas Das 16. Bijoy Bhattacharya, and 17. Pravas Chandra Dev.

All the accused appealed to the High Court against their conviction. Ashok Nandy died during the pendency of the appeal. The appeal was heard by the chief Justice Sir Lawrence Jenkins, and Mr. Justice Carnduff. By their judgement delivered on the 23rd November, 1909.

The death sentence on 1. Barindra kumar Ghosh, and 2. Ullaskar Dutt was commuted to one of transportation for life;

the sentence of life transportation on 3. Hem chandra Das, and 4. Upendranath Bandopadhyay was confirmed. The sentence of life transportation on 5. Bibhuti Sarkar, 6. Sudhir Sarkar, 7. Abinas chandra Bhattacharya, 8. Hri shikesh kanjilal, and 9, Indu Bhusan Roy was reduced to ten years transportation. The sentence on 10. Paresh Maulik' 11. Sisir Ghosh, and Nirapada Roy was reduced. 13. Balkrishna Hari kane was acquitted.

The two judges differed in respect of the five accused— Indranath Nandy, Sailendra Bose, Biren Sen, Sushil Sen, and Kaishna Jiban Sanyal. Their appeal was there fore, heard afresh by a third Justice of the High Court-Harrington. He delivered his judgement on the 11th Fhbruary, 1910, confirming the sentence of transportation for life on 14. Sailendranath Bose, and 15. Birendra Sen, and acquitting 16, Indranath Nandy, 17. Sushil Sen, and 18. Krishna Jiban Sanyal.

In the finall tally, therefore 14. of t he tried accused were convicted and 21 were acquitted, one having died in the meantime. The curtain was, thus, rung down on the most fascinating drama of Bengal's inital phase of armed revolutionary strnggle.

Balance sheet of the First Round of Armed Reuolutionary Struggle in Bengal

In the British Camp :

Killed-Britishers-Nil ; Innocent Anglo-Indian ladies -2(Mrs and miss Kennedp) ; Indian agents and servants of the British Govrnment -4 (approver Naren Goswami, Public Prosecutor Ashu Biswas. Sub-Inspector Nandalal Banerjee, and D. S. P. Shamsul Alam).

Wounded-Britishers-2 (Allen and a passenger in a
Suburdan railway train).

Futile Attempts on the lives of Britishers-4.

(Lient-Goveronr Andew Fraser, Judge KingsFord,

missionary Hickenbotham, and Government prosecutor Hume) and one a Franchman (Mayor of Chandernagor). In the Revolutionary Camp :

Killed-7 (executed 5-Khudiram Bose, Satyendra Bose, Kanai Lal Dutt, Charus Bose, Birendra Dutta Gupte ; Suicide-1 (Prafulla Chaki) ; Accident-1 (Prafulla Chakravarty)

Transportation for life-6 (Barindra Kumar Ghosh, Ullaskar Dutt, Hem chandra Das, Upendra Nath Bandopadhyay, Sailendra Bose, and Birendra Sen)

Transportation for 10 years-5(Bibhuti Sarkar, Sudhir Sarkar, Abinash Chandra Bhattacharya, Harishekesh Kanjilal, and Indu Bhusan Roy).

Sentenced to shorter terms of imprisonment-3.

(Paresh Maulik, Sisir Ghosh, and Nirapada Roy)-

Tarachand's observations on the revolutionaries of Bengal and their activities (History of Freedom Movement-Vol 3) are Pithy and pejorative. Writes he :

"The secret societies collected arms and ammunition and also manufactured bombs and explosives. They collected funds for their activities by committing dacoites and plundering banks, treasuries, post offices, and the rich.

The victims of their exploits were largely Indians whom the terrorists regarded as treacherous enemies of India-Policemen, public prosecutors, approvers, informers, spies, and others.

The plots to murder Englishmen were rarely successful."

It must be admitted that Tarachand's statements, as far as they go, are not factually incorrect. One cannot but feel sorely disappointed over the repeated, almost invariable failure of the first batch of Bengal revolutionaries to kill their British targets. Their appalling ineptitude and inefficiency in this regard was due to their inexperience, lack of proper planning and adequate training. It was certainly an amateurish attempt at armed revolution, "a child's play at

revolution, as Mr. C.R. Das characterised it in course of his address to the court.

Tarachand also puts his finger rightly on two debatable aspects of the revolutionary movement in Bengal-committing of political dacoities, and killing of Indian agents of the British Government.

But this is taking a very narrow and one-sided view of the affair and putting the blind eye to the true importance and significance of Bengal's revolutionary struggle. While committing of political dacoities, and killing of Indians may be dismissed as of little political effect and value, attempts on the lives of Britishers, even when unsuccessful, had tremendous political importance and significance. They checked British civilians, to some extent at least, from running berserk with racial hatred and imperialist hauteur.

The revolutionaries could never touch British military personnel in India. Their racial and imperial savagery and barbarity continued undiminished, as would be exemplified later by one British Lieut-General, whose name was Dyer.

Secondly, such attempts on Britishers even when unsuccessful—"honest attempts," as the leader, Sri Aurobinda Ghosh described them, kindled the fire of courageous patriotism in the breast of a few, at least, of the youth of the land.

Above all, these attempts helped to dispel to some extent the fear of the British which sat like a nightmare on the chest of every Indian subject and slave. They began the transformation of the slave mentality of a subject people, to which Gandhiji so often referred in a later stage of the national struggle.

When the cumulative effect of such attempts is taken into account one may claim that every such attempt was a nail driven into the coffin of the British Indian Empire.

The pioneer revolutionaries of Bengal, through their organ,

Jugantar, and revolutionary pamphlets and tracts, some of which were written by Sri Aurobinda himself, boldly, frankly, freely sowed deep and wide the seeds of an armed revolutionary cult in the hearts of the educated middle class youth of Bengal. That is why the armed conflict against Britishers continued for three decades in Bengal, as nowhere else in India. Indeed, the finest of the Bengal revolutionaries came in their final hour in the early thirties of the century, when the rest of India had dropped out of the armed struggle. That is also one of the main reasons why the non-violent mass movements sponsored by Mahatma Gandhi never found powerful response in Bengal, barring the district of Midnapur and its adjoining pocket of Arambag belonging to the Hooghly District.

In the district of Midnapur, (the district of Sahid Khudiram and Sahid Satyendranath) however, the Gandhian movements were invariably stronger than in any others region of India.

To pooh-pooh the efforts and contribution of the first batch of revolutionaries of Bengal in India's fight for freedom would be committing a deliberate distortion of history.

To quote once again the oft-quoted lines of an English poet :

Say not the struggle naught availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain ;
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And things remain as they have been.

Things did not certainly remain in Bengal, or in India what they had been before bombs and bullets burst in Bengal.

Finally, as to the historic significance of the Revolt of 1905 in Bengal, a Vinayak Damodar Savarkar would have hailed it as the Second war of Indian Independence. Indeed, a small volume, written in Bengali, by Dr Bhupendra Nath Dutt

is entitled Bharater Dwitiya Swadhinata Sangram (India's Second war of Independence). Even when one refrains from putting forward such a tall claim for it, there is no gainsaying that with the Revolt of 1905 in Bengal commenced in right earnest India's struggle for National Independence.

The Revolt of 1905 in Bengal was the source-spring of the stream of India's national struggle for emancipation from foreign thraldom. As the years rolled by, the stream grew in volume and dimensions. Till at last in a crescendo of three successive mighty inundations of mass upsurge covering the entire subcontinent, first, in 1921, again in 1930, and finally in 1942—all under the banner of the Indian National Congress and each initiated and led by Mahatma Gandhi, it swept British Rule out of India.

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| 43 | 8 | underdogs | undergos |
| 47 | 11 | Brahmins | Brshiman |
| 47 | 8th from bottom | 1835 | 1836 |
| 76 | 7 | multitude | multitue |
| 110 | 16 | by way of protest | by way protest |
